Daily Report

Latin America

FBIS-LAT-88-038
Friday
26 February 1988

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Group of Eight Supports Cuba's Admission to OAS

FL251533 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Allan Wagner, Peruvian foreign minister, said in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia that the Group of Eight supports Cuba's admission to the OAS. The minister said this will happen when our country feels it is appropriate.[sentence as heard]

Group of Eight Issues Communique on Falklands

PY252144 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 2028 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 25 Feb (TELAM)— San Martin Palace has released a Group of Eight (Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, and Colombia) foreign minister's declaration from Cartagena de Indias (Colombia) condemning the announcement of the UK Maneuvers in the Malvinas Islands.

At the end of the first working meeting in Cartagena, in northern Colombia, the foreign ministers released a communique stating that the announcement by London of military maneuvers in the Malvinas Islands between 7 and 30 March creates a situation of tension in the area.

Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo told reporters that the Malvinas issue was not on the agenda of the foreign ministers' meetings. However, he added, in a gesture for which my government and my country are very grateful, the foreign ministers unanimously decided to issue a communique rejecting the British decision.

Caputo characterized the communique as strong and categorical. He said the same position regarding the British announcement will be adopted next week when the foreign ministers of the Contadora Group and those of the five Central American countries meet with their European counterparts in Hamburg, FRG.

Caputo said the British "colonial policy will not help to achieve continental or international peace." He added that Argentina is explaining the situation regarding the Malvinas Islands to all international organizations and that all Latin American countries are supporting the Argentine position.

The communique released by the foreign ministers of the Group of Eight says: The foreign ministers of the Group of Eight express their deepest concern over the United Kingdom's decision to conduct military maneuvers in the Malvinas Islands, and they note the seriousness of this decision, which will create ever-increasing tension in the South Atlantic. They also point out the gravity of the British decision to ignore the fact that, at the UN General Assembly, most of the countries of the world have declared the South Atlantic a zone of peace and cooperation.

The communique concludes by urging the British Government to give up the planned military maneuvers and to restart bilateral negotiations with the Argentine Republic in order to solve peacefully and definitively all disputes over the Malvinas Islands sovereignty, and the other problems still existing between the two countries.

OAS Secretary on UK Maneuvers

PY251122 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0002 GMT 24 Feb 88

[Text] Brasilia, 24 Feb (EFE)—OAS Secretary General Joao Clemente Baena Soares today told EFE he does not agree with the military maneuvers Great Britain will conduct on the Malvinas Islands in March.

Baena Soares, who today met with President Jose Sarney, said that on 1 March the OAS Permanent Council will hold a meeting at the request of the Argentine Government. Although he could not give details concerning the decisions to be adopted. Baena Soares said "the manuevers will not help the climate of peace that should prevail in the area." "I do not believe the military maneuvers on the Malvinas Islands will help achieve an understanding between Argentina and the United Kingdom," he added.

Regarding his visit to Brazil, Baena Soares explained that he signed an agreement with Brasilia Governor Jose Aparecido to implement a program designed to clean up the Paranoa lake. He also briefed President Sarney on the OAS agenda.

Baena Soares announced that during the first half of March, the OAS will hold its second meeting within "the program against drug trafficking." He added: "At this meeting all OAS country members will coordinate efforts to find solutions to this terrible scourge."

Baena Soares said he reported to President Sarney that at the OAS General Assembly to be held in El Salvador in November, the nomination of the new OAS secretary general will probably be discussed "because my term of office will end on 20 June 1989."

Regarding the possibility of Cuba returning to the OAS, Baena Soares said "Cuba is still a member of the OAS; the suspension only affects its activities at the OAS." He added that neither the General Assembly nor the Permanent Council are planning to reconsider the end of this suspension for the time being.

Baena Soares said the good will of the foreign ministries of the "Group of Eight," who are now meeting in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, "will help to find a solution to normalize Cuba's situation at the OAS."

Argentina's Caputo Comments

PY252017 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 1924 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Cartagena de Indias, 25 Feb (TELAM-PL)—Argentine Foreign Minister Dante Caputo said here today that British provocation in the South Atlantic creates tension on the continent and in the rest of the world. Caputo also said all Latin American countries unanimously support Argentina.

Caputo said that inexplicably and provocatively, the United Kingdom decided to conduct military maneuvers around the Malvinas Islands.

The Argentine foreign minister, who is attending the third meeting of the Group of Eight foreign ministers with his Colombian, Venezuelan, Mexican, Panamanian, Peruvian, Uruguayan, and Brazilian counterparts, said during the meeting that his country will denounce the British aggression in all international forums.

In this sense, Argentina is already taking some steps, such as convoking an emergency meeting of the OAS Permanent Council for next week.

Caputo emphasized the support Argentina has received from all the countries comprising the Group of Eight and said his country always insists on two basic principles: its sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands and a negotiated solution to the controversies.

Cuba

U.S. Presents Anti-Cuban Resolution at UN

FL252148 Havana Radio Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Feb 88

[By Orlando Contreras, from the Palace of Nations in Geneva]

[Text] The United States this afternoon presented an anti-Cuban draft resolution to the UN Human Rights Commission meeting here in Geneva. The Reagan administration's draft includes an extensive gambit of lies and accusations against our country. The resolution seeks to include the situation in Cuba under Point 12 in next year's agenda.

Point 12 in this year's agenda says, and I quote:

Question of human rights violations and fundamental rights anywhere in the world, especially in colonial and dependent countries and territories. [no end quote cited]

The introduction to the resolution says that the anti-Cuban draft presented today by the U.S. delegation is based—and I quote from an unofficial translation—on information from human rights activists in Cuba who report continued and extensive violations of various aspects of liberties and basic human rights, including the execution of people. [no end quote cited]

The so-called human rights activists in Cuba are a counterrevolutionary [word indistinct] that have lent themselves to ignite the Reagan administration's obstinate and aggressive anti-Cuban campaign.

The report the U.S. delegation cited here was presented in Havana by several individuals, foreign correspondents, as well as several Western diplomats.

For its part, the Cuban Foreign Ministry provided the foreign press accredited in Cuba with documented information which shows that the accusations are false, including the cases mentioned by the self-proclaimed defenders of human rights and the U.S. delegation here in Geneva.

Campaign 'Spreads Distrust'

FL251948 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 1524 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Regardless of what the final results of Washington's maneuvers against Cuba at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva may be, the action has spread distrust among attending delegations.

Although representatives of the Commission's member countries preferred to keep their opinions to themselves on the anti-Cuban campaign, PRENSA LATINA was able to confirm that the evidence presented by our country made a strong impact at the forum.

The United States will hold a news conference tomorrow in Geneva and will present a plan accusing the Cuban Government of violating human rights. According to a Latin American specialist attending the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Commission, Washington's measures against Cuba cause great annoyance among the delegations.

Valladares Prepares for News Conference

FL251746 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1244 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Telephone report from "Hot Off the Press" section of "Morning Magazine" by Orlando Contreras from the Palace of Nations in Geneva—live]

[Text] In the midst of a million dollar campaign and strong pressures from the United States against Cuba, Nicaragua, the Palestinian people, as well as the peoples of the Third World who are struggling for their liberation, the humble voice of an old woman rang as the just claim of truth at the Human Rights Commission meeting conference room. (?Vilma) Torres Mendoza, president of Europe-Third World Association, a nongovernmental organization participating as observer in this Geneva meeting, said all her children had been assassinated. The sadistic mercenary bands financed by President Reagan—I am citing her words—were responsible for those crimes. Mrs Torres Mendoza at one time was illiterate. She told those attending the meeting that the Sandinist revolution taught her to read and write. She spoke on behalf of 20,000 mothers who are suffering because their children are missing or have been killed.

The head of the U.S. delegation Armando Valladares did not hear Mrs Torres Mendoza's testimony. He is very busy listening to the instructions of his advisers to see how he can deny during his news conference tomorrow that he was policeman No 2747 of the Batista regime and that, during the early years of the revolution, he defended human rights with Eden cigarette cases used to kill innocent people he didn't even know.

Prisons Serve as Example of Human Rights

FL251920 Havana Radio Reloj Network in Spanish 1527 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] The Cuban penitentiary system is one of the most modern and advanced in the world with an essential objective, to achieve the rehabilitation of man. This was said by Jose Alambarri Herrera, chief attorney of the Directorate of Control of Legality in penitentiary facilities.

He made a broad analysis on the life of a prisoner and the treatment he receives in prisons. Efforts are made to modify their behavior with the necessary severity but, at the same time, respecting the rights of all men.

In those centers, prisoners are organized in detachments. They are grouped by ages and education levels and are trained so when they are released, they can reincorporate themselves to society.

Attorney Alambarri underscored that from a human rights perspective, our prisons are an example of respect for human dignity. They are centers to rescue men.

CSSR's Bilak Heads Party Delegation in Havana

FL252035 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1800 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] A CSSR Central Committee delegation headed by Vasil Bilak, member of the Presidium and Secretariat of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia [KSC] Central Committee, arrived in Cuba this morning. The party delegation will attend the meeting of foreign secretaries of communist and labor parties from socialist countries which will begin in this capital next Monday.

Jorge Risquet Valdes and Julio Camacho Aguilera, members of our PCC Politburo, welcomed the KSC party mission at the Jose Marti International Airport. Delegation members will participate in the ceremony commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Victorious February to take place at the Nico Lopez National School of the PCC this afternoon. They will also hold official talks at the Central Committee offices.

Upon his arrival, Vasil Bilak expressed the significance of the Victorious February for his people.

[Begin Vasil Bilak recording in vernacular with simultaneous Spanish translation] In these days, not only do we recall that date but we also begin to analyze the results of what we have accomplished and, above all, everything we have ahead of us. The tasks we have before us are gigantic. We are once again going through a big revolutionary transition period because we must develop the heritage of the Victorious February. The 17th Congress outlined a program of accelerated economic development which, of course, requires many new mechanisms. Fundamentally, it requires a new direction for the national economy. Furthermore, it requires changes in the way an individual thinks. [end recording]

Holds Talks With Risquet

LD260953 Prague CTK in English 0700 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Havana Feb 26 (CTK correspondent)—Czechoslovak Communist Party Presiduim member and Central Committee secretary Vasil Bilak met here yesterday with Jorge Risquet, member of the Politburo and Secretariat of the Communist Party of Cuba Central Committee.

The two representatives informed one another of the implementation of the conclusions of the 17th Czechoslovak Communist Party Congress and of the 3rd Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba, of the overall situation in their countries and their foreign political initiatives.

Discussing the situation in the world, they agreed that after the signing of the Soviet-U.S. treaty on the liquidation of several classes of missiles a new era starts in international relations. The qualitatively new situation creates better conditions for the struggle for peace and for creating a broad world front of peace and democratic forces.

The two representatives pointed to the connection between solving global questions of international security and solving regional conflicts, and to mutual connection of problems of peace and the economic and social development. They voiced solidarity with Nicaragua and support for the efforts for a peaceful settlement of the situation in Central America and other hotbeds of tension in the world.

Vasil Bilak and Jorge Risquet stressed the importance of the struggle for a new just international economic order and for solving problems of foreign debts of developing countries which limit their possibilities to improve their economic and social situation. They paid attention also to the development of the international communist and workers' movement and subjective conditions of the development of the revolutionary process in the world.

Vasil Bilak arrived in Havana on Thursday to attend a meeting of secretaries for international relations of the central committees of the fraternal parties of the socialist countries.

Addresses Meeting

LD261013 Prague CTK in English 0756 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Havana February 26 (CTK correspondent)—Czechoslovak Communist Party Presidium member and Central Committee Secretary Vasil Bilak pointed to the attacks of imperialism against socialist Czechoslovakia in 1948, at a meeting here today marking the 40th anniversary of the victory of the working people in Czechoslovakia.

Vasil Bilak stressed that neither today can Czechoslovakia expect support from class enemies in carrying out the most revolutionary changes since 1948, in implementing the line of the 17th Czechoslovak Communist Party Congress and restructuring all spheres of the country's economic and social life and extending socialist democracy.

Historical experience shows that Czechoslovakia can go along the path chosen by its people in February 1948 only in the firm unity of the party, in its link with the people, in international friendship, alliance and mutual assistance of the nations fighting for joint targets.

These attributes of the Czechoslovak policy are today of utmost necessity as Czechoslovakia, together with other socialist countries, is solving the tasks of historic significance—to ensure lasting peace and security, to strengthen the positions of socialism and increase its attraction in the world, Vasil Bilak stressed.

He voiced the conviction that Czechoslovakia and Cuba will abide by their responsibility in implementing these great universal and social ideals.

Jorge Risquet Receives Palestinian Official

FL251438 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Jorge Risquet, PCC Politburo member, received yesterday in Havana the high-level Palestinian official (Abbas Saqi), who is carrying a message from Yasir 'Arafat for our party's leadership.

Ethiopia's Amanuel Meets With Malmierca

FL252105 Havana Radio Progreso Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Amanuel Amde Michael, vice president of the Council of State and member of the Politburo of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, had a working meeting with Cuban Foreign Minister Isidoro Malmierca yesterday. The visitor underscored the fraternal and solidary ties linking the Cuban and Ethiopian peoples, their parties, and governments.

Trade Talks Begin

FL252101 Havana Tele-Rebelde Network in Spanish 1200 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Talks on the Cuban-Ethiopian 1988 trade protocol have begun in Havana. The plenary session was presided over by Tadesse Gebre Kidan, member of the Workers Party of Ethiopia Central Committee and foreign trade minister, and German Amado-Blanco, acting foreign trade minister of Cuba.

In reference to the exchange of goods based on [words indistinct] will be negotiated for agricultural products and on Cuba's part, different construction equipment and material.

The Ethiopian delegation will be in Cuba until the protocol is signed on Monday, 29 February, and they will meet with several party and government personalities.

Barbados

Prime Minister Describes Serious Debt Situation

FL250311 Bridgetown CANA in English 2338 GMT 24 Feb 88

[Text] Bridgetown, Barbados, Feb 24, CANA—Barbados Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford has described the country's debt situation as serious and requiring careful management. He told parliament on Tuesday that the national debt at the end of 1987 stood at BDS1.4 billion dollars (1 bds dol: 50 cents U.S.) and said measures will have to be introduced to simulate revenue.

Speaking on a bill to amend the laws relating to the raising of local loans, Sandiford, who is minister of finance, said the foreign component of the debt was BDS775.2 million dollars. He said government would be seeking new loans to assist in paying off the existing ones and said every precaution had to be taken to ensure that Barbados did not fall into the debt trap like some other developing countries.

Sandiford said this meant that money which would normally be available for stimulating investment would have to be channelled instead towards paying interest and amortising debt. He said he would have more to say on the matter during parliamentary debate on the government's 1988 estimates of expenditure beginning on March 14.

Shadow minister of finance, Owen Arthur, said the financial situation was due to an extremely weak export sector.

Dominican Republic

Two Killed in Antigovernment Demonstrations

FL251638 Bonaire Trans World Radio in English 1130 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Stone throwing protesters battled police in antigovernment demonstrations yesterday in the Dominican Republic. Hundreds were arrested and two people were shot to death by police in Azua about 120 miles southwest of Santo Domingo.

Police wounded 3 demonstrators with gunfire and arrested about 200 during protests against the government of President Joaquin Balaguer who has been battling widespread discontent largely sparked by government mandated increases in the prices of food and medicine.

Government To Repress Protests

PA251810 Paris AFP in Spanish 1538 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Santo Domingo, 25 Feb (AFP)—President Joaquin Balaguer, in a surprise speech televised shortly after midnight, warned that the government will repress "with

all the military strength and all the state's physical power" any illegal demonstrations. This warning comes after a day of violent protest in eight provinces.

In his speech, the president asked all the cabinet and ranking government officials to place their posts at the disposal of the executive branch so the government team "can be restructured to respond to the prevailing circumstances of the nation."

The protesters' demands range from solutions to local problems to demands for a reduction in the high cost of living and better land distribution. The violence peaked yesterday in Azua (101 km south of Santo Domingo), Villa Altagracia (41 km north) and San Francisco de Macoris (120 km northeast).

In Azua, groups of demonstrators sacked a poultry market and burned a supermarket. By the end of the day, local correspondents reported 12 people had sustained bullet wounds, although none of them was serious. A student and a transportation worker were killed by bullets in a clash with policemen Tuesday. The deputy chief of the National Police was investigating the incident yesterday.

In San Francisco, demonstrations included the customary burning of tires and throwing of stones. The local police commander, who is being "purged" to establish responsibility for the disorders, said several hundred people were arrested.

Press reports described the same scene in Villa Altagracia, while strikes and demonstrations to demand local infrastructure projects and price reductions took place in at least eight provinces.

Meanwhile, in the city of La Vega and Cotui, executives of the Dominican Rosario Mining Enterprise, which extracts and commercializes gold from the Pueblo Viejo Mine, were prepared to correct the cause of a wave of community protest: the relocation of approximately 1,000 peasant families who allege that the gold mine residue contaminates the drinking water and water used to irrigate their crops.

President Balaguer (who is 80 years old and blind) called the mass protest movement "subversive" based on reported acts of looting and arson that were staged in Azua "by hooded individuals."

Balaguer also noted that groups of demonstrators circulated pamphlets entitled "Rebellion," which detail "how to make a Molotov cocktail, fabricate tacks (to deflate car tires), and use appropriate tactics to destroy property."

The president declared that "there will not be killings like those of 14 April 1984," alluding to 2 days of demonstrations when police engaged in excesses and protesters had to be repressed by military units, resulting in more than 100 dead and 200 wounded.

He reiterated his position to permit peaceful demonstrations within the legal framework, but warned that if they "degenerate, as they are degenerating, into terrorist acts," the government will step in to force its leaders to conform to legal bounds.

Although police have the situation under control, the president hinted that "if circumstances warrant," the government will resort "to all the military strength, all the physical power available." "He who speaks loves history and wants to go down in it unstained...he who speaks loves his fatherland more than history, he who speaks is hurt more by the Dominican Republic than himself," the president concluded.

Balaguer Asks Cabinet To Resign

PA251926 Buenos Aires REUTER in Spanish 1754 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Santo Domingo, 25 Feb (REUTER) — Dominican President Joaquin Balaguer today asked his cabinet to resign following violent protests against the high cost of living that have left two people dead.

In a speech he delivered shortly after midnight, Balaguer said a complete resignation of his cabinet was necessary to facilitate the changes demanded by the population. However, he said it was possible to keep some of his cabinet members in their posts after a reshuffle.

Strikes and violent demonstrations to demand lower prices on staple products and the completion of various works projects broke out in several interior cities. Two demonstrators were killed Tuesday by police who were trying to control a demonstration in Azua, 90 km south of the capital, where at least one store was burned down by the demonstrators.

In his speech, Balaguer said government forces would "act strongly" to put future demonstrations under control. Balaguer added that he had given orders to Interior Secretary Elias Wessin y Wessin not to authorize marches or political demonstrations, which authorities say could result in violent acts.

Santo Domingo, with a population of some 2 million residents, was calm, but the population closely followed the continuous demonstrations in provincial cities, including Santiago, La Vega, Salcedo, and Cotui.

Presidential economic adviser Juan Jose Arteaga told journalists that government representatives were ready to travel to the interior to negotiate with strike organizers. However, while the government was trying to quell

the demonstrators, Industry and Commerce Secretary Rafael Marion Landais yesterday announced price increases for various staples, among them cooking oil and pastas.

Balaguer warned that "if the disorders continue, the government would strongly intervene." Balaguer said the 1964 [as received] killings under Salvador Jorge Blanco's government would not be repeated. On that occasion more than 100 persons were killed and many others were injured in violent protests against the high cost of living.

Haiti

Manigat Holds First 'Chat With People'

FL251729 Port-au-Prince Domestic Service in Creole 0100 GMT 20 Feb 88

[First talk by President Leslie Manigat, of planned twice a month series called "Friendly Chat With the Haitian People," from his Santo residence; monitored in progress—live]

[Excerpts] ...now realizes that the Haitian people are tired. They need to get down to serious business, to feel a program start up. They need to see a path undertaken that will settle on the nation's fundamental programs. Thus, I think there is one basic fact now: the people are taking the government seriously and the government is taking the people seriously. There is a feeling of expectation in Haiti now. Trust is in the process of being reestablished. There is a feeling of hope in Haiti now, and this places a great responsibility on our shoulders because we simply do not have the right to disappoint the Haitian people.

However, I would like to tell the people straight off—because we are not demagogues—that we understand these expectations, and we are working to meet them, but we cannot meet them all at once, in a single stroke. We cannot satisfy them immediately.

The country is in an extremely difficult situation. The government lacks liquid assets—hard cash. Also, after 30 years of dictatorship, the country is in incredibly bad shape. We must set the public administration in order, set the country in order. This is going to take time. Of course, we understand there are emergencies we must confront, but I am asking the Haitian people to be patient with us. [passage omitted]

We are going to bring change to Haiti. There have been changes in the names of the ministries because there have been changes made in the ministries. [passage omitted] We have to have a team that wants change and believes change is really possible. This team will now begin to prepare the organic law for that change. [passage omitted] We are planning to submit a bill to parliament around Tuesday that will bring the ministries' organic laws in line with their names. [passage omitted]

I would like you to really understand the problem of an election council. A Provisional Electoral Council [CEP] was formed during the transitional period. It did its work, and now we must close that chapter, because the work of the CEP ended, in principle, with the setting in place of the new institutions. It has to finish up certain administrative matters, close certain files, etc. This is normal, but its normal lifespan is over.

In closing the files on an institution when its normal lifespan is over, there is usually a general review of everything that was done—including financial matters. This is why there is a certain amount of work that must be done in connection with CEP I and CEP II, so we may close the files and go on to deal with the matter of a permanent election council. [passage omitted]

There are problems for which solutions can always be found. All a person has to do is put his problem before the government. This is a government of good faith. We have no reason to hurt anyone. The government has no intention of hurting anyone. All that is required is that the problem be stated. It will then be discussed and the fairest solution sought. The solution will be applied with pleasure to the extent that it is really necessary. I can give that guarantee. It is with this same good faith, this same seeking of the best solution for the greatest number of people, that we have been broaching certain political problems since assuming office.

For example--although I don't like to name names—there is the Louis Dejoie case. This is a case in the process of being solved. Dejoie announced that the judicial authorities are going to close the file. Here is an example that shows we are indeed moving toward calmer, more normal times. Legal action had been initiated against him. Now the dossier is going to be closed. I did not get involved in this. Why? Because I respect the power of the judiciary. All I know is that I do encourage a situation of calm, of normalization, so everyone can participate in and contribute to the great task at hand.

Thus, I am very pleased to see things have gone according to our hopes. This, it turns out, happens to match the desire for pacification by the whole government apparatus, the various branches of government.

In the same way, the problem of political exiles in embassies is being solved. Measures have already been taken to allow this pressure to be taken care of as soon as possible. For example, as regards one of those in asylum, Sansaricq, we are ready. He may have even left already this morning. In any case, we said we were willing to allow him to leave. If he has not left yet, he will soon, because the order to deliver a safe-conduct to him has already been given, and the embassy concerned has been informed of this.

Unfortunately, as regards the second one, it isn't our fault. The ambassador is not there. As soon as the ambassador returns—he will be back next week—we will

solve that problem too, and the person will be able to leave. Thus there will be no more people in asylum in an embassy. That, too, is a gesture that shows the government's intention to reduce tension, to relax things, to relax the atmosphere. [passage omitted]

We want to relax the political atmosphere, and we are taking a series of measures to allow everyone to really feel at ease in Haiti, so they will not have anything left hanging over their heads to scare them. On the contrary, the climate we are creating is one of unity, of confidence, and especially of revival, because we must resume activity in Haiti.

We are also carefully studying the possibility of an amnesty. As you know, three political prisoners have already been released. All these things show that a page has really been turned in Haiti, and we are going to begin a new page. Together, all of us, all of us [repeat himself] are going to make the effort necessary to progressively democratize Haiti.

As to the definitive election council, the Constitution stipulates how it is to be formed. We are going to organize it but not right away. There is no rush, because there is nothing urgent coming up. [passage omitted] We have no money these days. You know we have had to shave the operating budget, so we cannot start the permanent election council at present. However, we will allocate funds in October, in the next fiscal year, so the permanent election council can operate normally as the fundamental institution of our new democracy.

Thus, you can see the government's orientation is very clear. I say this with pride and with a sense of responsibility. No serious person in Haiti should even for a second doubt the government's intention to be democratic. Of course, we have always said there are things that a newborn babe cannot immediately do, things it learns, in time, to do. At present, all of us are learning to be democratic: the Haitian people, the Army, the government—all of us, because this is not something we are accustomed to. It is normal for us to be a little shaky, after the 30 years of dictatorship we just went through. But, we are going to stand up and head for democracy, which is our destination and our compass, and the source of the principles of governmental action and of the rules of conduct that we are going to adopt.

With this said, there is more to Haiti than just politics. We are facing very serious problems which we are going to solve as time goes on. We will address them one at a time. Some of them can become urgent, like the waste problem. We have a very clear position on the waste problem. I hope everyone heard the government communique on this matter. [passage omitted]

Of course we also have a few small problems which we should quickly mention before we mention the big ones of how to get things underway. For example, there is the matter of the churches. I thank certain priests, certain bishops, and many of the faithful of the Catholic Church who prayed for us at the time of the inauguration. Many of them called us, either before or after the inauguration, to say they had devoted the morning to praying for us, for the government to be a good one, blessed by God. I thank all—priests, bishops, and the faithful—who did this for us.

As regards the Te Deum business, I see people are continuing a campaign of disinformation, of misinformation. The international press said the church refused to celebrate a Te Deum. This is not true. I have already said, and I reiterate: The provisional government, the CNG [National Government Council] did not request a Te Deum. That is why a Te Deum problem never came up. The church did not refuse to say one. It is simply that one was never requested by the state for the inauguration.

I also thank all the Protestant churches that in certain parts of the country organized ceremonies to ask God's blessing for the new government, which they knew had good intentions. In fact, they had supported us during the electoral campaign.

Next, I thank the Voodoo cults in particular. They had thanksgiving ceremonies to draw God's attention—they believe in God, too—to the government, so that it can be a good government, so that the practitioners of Voodoo can enjoy freedom and equal treatment, just like any other religion in Haiti. The state is neutral on this matter and ready to allow all religions to flourish normally, on the condition, of course, that they respect the rules and the law. [passage omitted]

We can understand the Haitian people's impatience. That is why we have asked all the ministers to see what emergency programs are ready as soon as they start to work.

There was even financing for some of these programs, but for a thousand different reasons, they were never implemented. This was either because foreigners were awaiting a definitive, more stable, government, or because of some technical detail, or because they didn't want to start the program under a provisional government. We are going to take a look at all these emergency programs, in all the ministries, during Wednesday's Cabinet meeting, to see what programs we can undertake; for example, roads, irrigation, low-cost housing, hospitals, and schools.

There are quick projects that are ready, that we can use to get things moving while waiting to find money with which to undertake the real priorities in the government's program. For that, we have to find money. We will get this money from inside Haiti, through a national effort; but we will also find it with the help of certain foreign countries. As we normalize relations, we will get help from all the foreign countries, be they countries that are in the habit of helping us or countries that have

decided to help us from now on because they see that serious people have come to power, people who love the Haitian people, people who are devoted to improving the condition of the Haitian masses first, the masses who are in terrible shape and whose lives need to be changed. [passage omitted]

There is something I would like to talk about, so I can conclude this point: the importance we attach to the houses of the people. We had promised to make these houses of the people the cornerstone of our program. Well, we are going to begin as quickly as possible to build these houses of the people throughout Haiti. The project calls for a total of some 2,000 of these houses: 3 per communal section, with the rest in the towns.

What exactly are these houses of the people? First of all, they are information centers, where the people can come to learn how things are going, both in their community and in the rest of the country. [passage omitted] Second, friends, they are centers where certain services will be provided for the population. [passage omitted] Third, they are centers for continuing and basic education. This is extremely important because training is of capital importance for our peasants, our workers, our city-dwellers, for the middle classes, for the wealthy—in short, for everyone. So, these houses are to serve as continuing education centers. They are also discussion centers, where people can gather to discuss the problems of their communities. [passage omitted] They will also serve as cultural and crafts centers. [passage omitted]

So friends, I think this shows you that we are headed for change, that the time for the change the population had asked for has come. The time has come because Haiti has really serious problems that people in the past pretended did not exist. Well, for our part, we are going to attack these problems. We are going to seize them and together with the entire Haitian people, try to solve them: illiteracy, infant mortality, deforestation.

Let's depoliticize these things. Let's depoliticize reforestation, so we can wage a national reforestation campaign. Let's depoliticize this business of children who die too early, so we can keep them alive longer. A national effort must be made for the survival of children. Let's depoliticize this business of literacy programs, so everyone, together, will get to work teaching people to read and write. [passage omitted]

The government exists to direct these things, to provide support, to provide the means, to make the program become a truly national program—because every nation must save itself. That is the message.

Friends, the first program has come to an end. We will meet again in 2 weeks. [passage omitted] Since this is the first time we held this talk, tell us how you feel about what I said. Give us your reaction. Let us know how you feel. [passage omitted]

Deputies To Investigate Toxic Waste Dumping

FL252211 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1200 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] A delegation of 10 Haitian deputies arrived in Gonaives yesterday to begin an investigation of the toxic waste the vessel "Khian Sea" left on the SEDREN [expansion unknown] wharf. This committee includes Guy Theodore, Serge Beaulieu, (Jean Michel Richardson), and (Paul Denis Joseph).

The decision to send a delegation to investigate was reached during the 11 February session of the Chamber of Deputies, where Gonaives deputy (Joachim Francois Stephen Moise) brought up the toxic waste matter. Mr (Moise) pointed out that it looked as if certain prominent figures were involved in the unloading of this garbage, which they tried to pass off as fertilizer. He also pointed out that the presence of 3,000 tons of toxic waste constitutes a great danger for Haiti. Now, in Gonaives, the big question is: Will the deputies in Gonaives have the courage to touch this open sore with their own fingers and tell the whole truth about it?

In any case, one truth is clear: The waste is present on the SEDREN wharf and it was brought by the "Khian Sea" from Philadelphia and dumped here with the complicity of certain Haitian citizens. Many people think this dumping would not have been possible without such complicity.

Medical Association Protests

FL252228 Port-au-Prince Radio Nationale in Creole 1200 GMT 24 Feb 88

[Excerpts] The matter of the "Khian Sea", which dumped a load of toxic waste in Haiti, on the SEDREN wharf in Gonaives, has given rise to a big controversy in Haiti. The population has reacted strongly. They are not happy about this at all. [passage omitted]

Many sectors are asking authorities in Haiti and the United States to see if they can't get the "Khian Sea" to come back to Haiti and pick up all its toxic junk, which constitutes a true danger to the Haitian people in general and to our environment.

The Haitian Medical Association has something to say in this matter. It sent a letter to the mayor of Philadelphia which says:

The association addresses you today to express its concern over the unloading of toxic waste from your city on the Haitian coast. [passage omitted]

Copies of this letter have been sent to the Haitian Interior Ministry, the prime minister, the minister of health, the Federation of Friends of Nature, Greenpeace, and the press. [passage omitted].

Armed Forces Members Reportedly Shoot Youth
FL252354 Port-au-Prince Radio Soleil Network in Creole 1200 GMT 24 Feb 88

[Monitored in progress]

[Excerpts]...took refuge at the police post on Delmas 3. We obtained more details on this matter from the justice of the peace and the clerk of the court in Delmas.

[Begin recording] [First Speaker] Shortly after two o'clock [a.m. or p.m. not specified] the sergeant from the police post came to get us so we could go and note officially that an individual had been found dead in the back of a Range Rover, license plate A9799.

We went to the scene and found the bullet-riddled body of a young man in the back of the vehicle. The judge officially noted this and then arrested these alleged security men, the men in the car. He sent both the men and the vehicle to the appropriate authorities.

[Reporter] What is the driver's name?

[First speaker] Frantz Cesar, I think, a security man attached to the Dessalines Barracks.

[Reporter] Who was he driving the vehicle for?

[First speaker] It belongs to the firm, Pierre International.

[Reporter] Didn't he tell you how this man was shot?

[First speaker] Well, according to the official record, they said the man in question had stolen $1,000 from their vehicle and the money belongs to Pierre International. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] Under the law, when someone steals, do they have the right to shoot him, kill him, and then cart him away in the back of a vehicle?

[Second speaker] If this were legal, I would not have arrested them. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] As the judge responsible for officially recording this incident, do you have to go meet with the firm?

[Second speaker] I am going to conduct the preliminary investigation. I will question them and then send them to the Public Prosecutor. [sentence indistinct].

[Reporter] When are you going to question them?

[Second speaker] Maybe Friday. [passage omitted]

[Reporter] Where are the offices of Pierre International?

[First speaker] In the industrial park.

[Reporter] Who manages the company?

[First speaker] Mr Pierre Coles.

[Reporter] Thank you.

[First announcer] Several questions are being asked. Why didn't the judge have the opportunity to go and officially note this death directly where the young man was killed? And where was the body taken? These are what certain people call slipups and they have been occurring frequently.

Thus, Wilfrid, a young student at Attorney Gerard Gourgue's school, was killed during an exchange of gunfire between someone named Jean, who is attached to the Criminal Investigations Department, and a member of the Armed Forces reportedly from the Dessalines Barracks, according to statements from witnesses.

The incident took place in (Lakou Blez), a small slum in the Salomon marketplace area. [passage omitted]

[Third speaker] [Passage omitted] Both of them are members of the Armed Forces.

[Reporter] Both are military men?

[Third speaker] Both are military men.

[Reporter] The one who fired, what company is he in?

[Third speaker] Casernes Dessalines.

[Reporter] And what about the other one?

[Third Speaker] I don't know.

[passage omitted] [end recording]

[Second announcer] That was a new slipup, among the many slipups being noted in Port-au-Prince and the provinces.

Public Health Workers Threaten To Strike
FL251645 Bonaire Trans World Radio in English 1130 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] In Haiti, public health workers have threatened to strike if the government does not issue January pay checks today. The Federation of Public Health Workers said employees at Port-au-Prince's main hospital would strike if they were not paid for last month's work. Radio stations broadcast the warning hours before President Leslie Manigat's 2-week-old administration was to hold its first cabinet meeting.

The United States has not renewed $78 million in economic and military aid to Haiti suspended after violent national elections on November 29 were haulted.

Martinique

Maritime Police Alert for Waste-Carrying Barge

FL251957 Bridgetown CANA in English 1826 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Fort-de-France, Martinique, Feb 25, CANA—Martinique's maritime police were put on alert Thursday to intercept a barge which was earlier said to be on the way to the island with a shipment of industrial waste from the United States.

The barge, from Philadelphia, was originally on its way to Haiti, but was diverted after Haitian President Leslie Manigat announced a total ban on further shipments of industrial waste to the country. A 4,000-ton shipment had already been dumped on the Haitian coast two weeks ago, in defiance of strong protests from environmental and other organisations.

French officials here said they had ordered marine police to take all action necessary to prevent the barge from entering Martiniquan waters but one source added that the vessel had now been diverted and may be heading for Guinea in East Africa.

Costa Rica

People's Party Appoints New Secretary General

PA251905 San Jose LIBERTAD in Spanish 12-18 Feb 88 p 3

[Communique issued by the Costa Rican People's Party (PPC) on 9 February]

[Excerpts] The fifth plenum meeting of the PPC Central Committee held on 6 February 1988 was briefed about and accepted the health reasons presented by Comrade Manuel Mora Valverde to be relieved from his duties as secretary general. [passage omitted]

The Central Committee appointed Comrade Lenin Chacon Vargas as PPC secretary general. Comrade Chacon joined the party's youth ranks in 1962 and held the post of secretary general from 1974 to 1980. He later took on other party leadership responsibilities. He is currently municipal regent of San Jose's central canton for the United People Coalition.

In making this decision, the PPC Central Committee urges all its activists and friends to accelerate their work and cooperation in tasks to strengthen the party in the organic, political, ideological, and economic areas within the framework of the national struggle for "peace and social justice" and in keeping with policies approved in the "Carmen Lyra" 15th congress held in August 1987.

Central Committee of the Costa Rican People's Party

San Jose, 9 February 1988

Briefs

Banana Exports Increase

San Jose, 23 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—The National Banana Association today reported that banana exports in 1987 increased 7 percent compared to 1986. Costa Rica exported nearly 52 million 18-kg crates. The United States is the main recipient, followed by the FRG. Bananas are the second highest foreign-currency-generating product after coffee. [Summary] *[Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1550 GMT 23 Feb 88 PA]*

Taiwan Grants Loan

Foreign Minister Rodrigo Madrigal Nieto has announced that Taiwan yesterday agreed to lend Costa Rica $55 million to reinforce the Central Bank's foreign reserves. The loan will be payable over 20 years, with a 4-year grace period, at an interest rate of 4 percent a year. [Summary] *[San Jose LA REPUBLICA in Spanish 16 Feb 88 p 2 PA]*

Guatemala

Spokesman Declines Comment on Panama Situation

PA260118 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0008 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpt] Guatemala City, 25 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—A government source said today that the removal of General Manuel Antonio Noriega from the post of Defense Forces commander "is a matter of internal politics in President Eric Arturo Delvalle's government."

President Vinicio Cerezo's spokesman, Julio Santos, said: "Consequently, and within the policy of respect for the principle of noninterference in other countries' internal affairs, Guatemala has no comment to issue on that decision."

Legislative Congress deputies of the Christian Democratic Party today countered a motion presented by the anticommunist National Liberation Movement (MLN) to condemn Gen Noriega. [passage omitted]

Nicaragua

D'Escoto Says Any Contra Aid 'Military Aid'

PA251935 Managua Domestic Service in Spanish 1810 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Havana—Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto believes any aid for the contras is military aid and does not contribute to the cease-fire negotiations. During a brief stopover in Havana, D'Escoto said that such aid encourages the contras to continue the armed actions with the hope that in the future President Reagan will recover lost ground.

D'Escoto was traveling to the FRG, where he will attend a meeting between the Central American, Contadora Group, and EEC foreign ministers.

Borge on U.S. Relations, Internal Situation

PM251206 Rome LA REPUBBLICA in Italian 24 Feb 88 p 7

[Report on interview with Interior Minister Tomas Borge by Sandro Viola in Managua; date not given]

[Excerpt] Managua—[Passage omitted] I asked Borge whether Sandinism had originally had a totalitarian blueprint and had subsequently had to yield under the pressure of the war and the economic crisis. "Let us say," the commander replied, "that for a long time our outlook was orthodox. What kind of orthodoxy am I talking about? Well, Marxism-Leninism, of course. Yes, we considered ourselves Marxist-Leninists and had in mind a communist society. We did not like the social democracies....

"...Then, however, we had to come to terms with reality, with specific situations. Reality taught us much more than any reading or theoretical discussion. Now we are convinced that political pluralism is not only possible but necessary in Nicaragua. Believe me, this idea of pluralism is not merely a smokescreen, something superficial, an expedient to extricate ourselves from the problem of the war and the economic crisis. It is our view of Nicaragua's political future. A coalition government with other parties—who knows? Maybe. In any case, it is a possibility that should not be rejected."

[Viola] What about the domestic situation, the erosion of support for Sandinism?

[Borge] The shortages are hard to endure, obviously. The population lacks everything—not only food supplies, but transport, health services, schools. Our boast was to have reduced illiteracy in so few years from 62 to 13 percent, but now we are back to 20 percent. I am not seeking absolution, but it must be borne in mind that all our energies are absorbed primarily by the war and also by politics (the Central American accords, the moods of Washington's Congress, and now the negotiations with the contras), that is, the quest for peace. This has caused us to neglect economic problems and to commit many mistakes....

Having said that, I do not believe we can be said to have lost our support. In any Latin American country the shortages now existing in Nicaragua would have caused very, very serious unrest. Instead the country is fairly calm—certainly not because of any fear of the police. The police in Nicaragua are much more disciplined than the police in neighboring countries that receive U.S. technical assistance. The only deaths to have occurred in political demonstrations over the years have been those of our supporters.

No, it is not fear of the police that still keeps people calm. However, it is true that unless the war ends there could be a famine, a tragic situation....

[Viola] How do you view future relations with the United States?

[Borge] There cannot be really good relations in the foreseeable future, whichever administration succeeds Reagan's. Tensions will contine because of their arrogance, their opinion that the Central American countries and governments are a zero, a nothing. Nevertheless, we must strive to achieve improvement. Some of America's anxieties are understandable, for instance, the fear that Nicaragua could become a military base for the socialist bloc. Well, I believe we should provide precise, clear, and negotiated guarantees in that regard. There is a U.S. security problem and it is up to us to take the necessary steps to dispel all ideas of a threat. It must be clear, however, that we will never be Washington's satellite. If this is what they mean by "good relations", they can forget it....

[Viola] Daniel Ortega, however, has spoken in terms of an army of 600,000 men, and you have been asking Moscow for MiG's for years. Why do you need a military structure on such a scale?

[Borges] Ortega merely said that a Nicaragua under threat "could" arm 600,000 men. Where are the economic bases to sustain such a large army, however? Who has the weapons, the gasoline and ammunition supplies, and the strategic artillery to really threaten our neighbors, as Reagan's propaganda maintains? As for the MiG's, a great deal of nonsense has been spoken in this regard. The fact is that we were asking for MiG19's, which are interceptors, not bombers, at a time when nearly everyone was convinced that Reagan had decided to invade....

[Viola] What about domestic freedoms, the limits within which the Sandinists intend to tolerate opposition?

[Borge] What limits? I had the last two oppositionists arrested in August because they had just met with contra leaders in Guatemala. The war was in progress and the emergency laws were still in force in August. In what country would measures not have been taken against people who had had contacts with the enemy? They, the two opposition delegates, denied it, but one of my men who had infiltrated the contras gave us all the information. All we could do was keep them in the cooler for a couple of weeks. Otherwise, there are no restrictions on expression for oppositionists. No, we have absolutely no intention of closing down LA PRENSA again.... [answer ends]

The sun was starting to set by the time the commander came to the subject of Gorbachev's USSR and its restructuring policy. The fervent admirer of Fidel Castro and former guerrilla of Marxist-Leninist "leanings" emerged rather naively, rather pathetically, in his vehement defense of the USSR's myth. "I do not like this iconoclastic furor toward the Soviet Union as it was until just the other day. It is a great country that has achieved formidable objectives...." It was a waste of time pointing out that it is the CPSU general secretary who is now arguing the need to reform everything, to start from scratch. Sitting up straight in his chair, a big cigar in his right hand, the commander thundered: "So allow me to disagree with Mr Gorbachev!"

Arce Views Inflation, Economic Reform Plan

PA241940 Managua BARRICADA in Spanish 20 Feb 88 p 3

[Interview with Bayardo Arce, FSLN commander of the revolution, by unidentified reporter; date, place not given]

[Text] BARRICADA: Commander, it is evident that state workers have played the leading role in this operation [currency exchange] of the economic front. What has the role of the FSLN been? Where has it been?

Arce: Undoubtedly, the FSLN—through the National Directorate—played a very definite role in this program. Once the government conceived and carried out the idea, its repercussions were discussed by the National Directorate to determine to what degree these results fulfilled the FSLN's great objective since the victory of the revolution: to defend all sectors.

After learning about and studying these ideas in depth, we reached the conclusion that the measures actually defend the standard of living of the people, the workers' sector. The ideas stimulate the productive sector that is honestly engaged in production, not in wheeling and dealing. Although we knew that those who reject everything the revolution does would also reject this, we gave our political endorsement to the measures, and we of course assumed the commitment this entailed.

BARRICADA: How was this support evident?

Arce: It was evident in the guidance we gave our FSLN activists and members, so they would heed any call the government made during the Martyrs of Quilali Operation. This was with the understanding that the government would carry this out secretly, and thus the activists and members were not going to be called to work in a monetary operation. All of our members were thus guided to answer the call to mobilize for the defense of the revolution and to carry out the political task of developing an awareness among those who are not members of our party but who are undoubtedly activists and soldiers of the revolution, so they would also take one step forward when the government made the call.

In this manner, once the government initiates the operation and begins to convoke—for various reasons—the state workers, teachers, and the mass sectors (in some areas, it was said there were going to be civil defense exercises; in others, they were told they were going to pick coffee; and in others, they were told they were going to the reserves), the FSLN members were the first ones to heed the call. They then immediately began to persuade others to heed the call.

When the operation was announced on Sunday, over 60,000 Nicaraguans were already involved in one of the most massive secrets in the history of our nation. Of course, within those 60,000 people, there were thousands of FSLN members in the lead and providing a fine example. That is where the FSLN was and continues to be, because the operation is still in the process of being dismantled, which gives our people a new outlook and more favorable conditions for struggling to defend their most immediate interests.

BARRICADA: What does the FSLN expect to achieve with the monetary reform?

Arce: We know the economic measures will not solve the country's economic problems. Countries like Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina have bigger reserves and stronger economies, but they have been unable to solve the problem of inflation...The United States is the most powerful country, but it has the biggest debt as well as inflation! Logically, we also have inflation! However, one must remember that a war, one resulting from an international economic crisis, adds to our problems. The war will always make it necessary to spend a substantial portion of our gross national product on defense.

In our case, defense offers the opportunity to build a much more just future. A defeat by U.S. imperialism would mean a return to the past. We would return to a Somozist dictatorship, although perhaps without Somoza. The peasants would have no land; schools and education would cost money; free markets would sell milk and meat only to those who can pay; the peasants and workers could never afford milk, cooking oil, or meat. The triumph of U.S. aggression would mean a return to the past. Therefore, because we must continue to defend ourselves, we will continue to spend money on defense; and inflation will undoubtedly increase due to these nonproductive expenses. This also means spending money on men whose job is defending the homeland. However, the new measures have created a different situation that allows the people—especially employees and producers—to defend the economy, which creates more favorable conditions to improve the economy and counter inflation.

We will certainly have inflation, but it will be at lower and more controlled levels. It all depends on the attitude of workers and producers. If we all exert ourselves to produce, work well, safeguard imported products, increase our level of exports to the utmost, and struggle without respite against speculators, then we may end the year with manageable inflation.

The government, which has pledged to defend the people's interests, will counter the inflation with the same policies but under better conditions. In other words, the government will adjust prices and salaries if the inflation level increases in any given period. The government has clearly explained, and we believe it is correct, that its goal is to ensure that workers and producers are capable of defending themselves against inflation. Therefore, the most important portion of the strategy to guarantee the successful implementation of these measures is to increase production, work efficiently, and counter speculation.

BARRICADA: What is your advice to the FSLN on this issue?

Arce: I want to use this opportunity to offer some advice, just as is being done through internal channels, to all FSLN activists and members. They should be the first to set the example in the tenacious struggle we must wage against speculation. Well, what is required of an FSLN member in this third phase of the large-scale program to promote overall progress in the struggle to defend the revolution?

First, an FSLN member must not purchase the speculators' products at extremely high prices. If the speculator wants to sell meat, papayas, or watermelons at black market prices, then the FSLN member should not buy them. Let them rot. When the speculator sees that no one is paying his high prices, then he will decide to sell his products at the correct price. However, the FSLN member must set the example by not paying those prices. He must become an example for his society, fellow workers, and neighborhood comrades; he must prove that he is not an accomplice and that he does not play the speculator's game by encouraging speculation.

Second, an FSLN member must remain alert to counter speculation and help enforce the nation's laws, particularly the Consumer Rights Law and laws that control the national economy. Also, if an FSLN member hears that someone is speculating, he must immediately report this person to the police, who must report this matter to the Ministry of Domestic Trade, so that the law is properly enforced. In this way the government can fulfill its duty of enforcing the law and guaranteeing the people's welfare. The government of any country, regardless of its system, is obligated to protect the people and society; it must protect society against any trickster. Therefore, an FSLN member has to set the example and denounce whoever breaks the law.

Third, if the masses struggling against the speculators mobilize to control prices, FSLN members must lead. If a neighborhood CDS [Sandinist Defense Committee] meets to control a speculator or a vendor, FSLN members must go there and lead. They must be willing to face any resistance by the speculator—some speculators can even be aggressive—when they force him to charge the prices that will defend the country's economy. If we achieve the objective we are setting for the FSLN members, the vast majority will receive the staples the state is trying to guarantee. The people have already taken up this objective, because, as we have seen, they have already convoked the CDS and CONAPRO [National Confederation of Professional Associations] and are calling everyone to this struggle. Also, we have minimum wages.

BARRICADA: Speaking of the masses, commander, what actual autonomy will the masses have to act? I am one of those who believes there is a trend within the FSLN to control the actions of the masses. The people are taking the initiative; people are even shopping in groups, because a speculator might wield a knife at a single buyer, like a housewife. Is the FSLN not afraid this will create tension among the people? Third, who are we fighting? Are the large speculators and the small speculators involved? Who is involved?

Arce: I will begin with the last part: Who are we fighting? I would say we are fighting our own mentality, which is why we say everyone must change. Two people are involved in speculation: the speculator; and the victim of the speculator, the "sucker" who buys. Therefore, consumers must stop being accomplices of speculation and stop buying from the speculators. We also urge the merchant (let's stop calling him speculator for a while) not to become a speculator.

I will refer to Msgr Obando y Bravo's homily of 2 days ago. He was using the figures given by the rightist trade union leaders who said they cannot live because they only earn 16 pesos a day compared to a minimum wage base of 500 pesos, which nobody in this country has. Msgr Obando y Bravo said he was concerned about what could be done. He said, "we could share." I believe Msgr Obando y Bravo's spriritual authority has given society a guideline: We must share. Merchants must stop making such big profits and trying to crush the people. They must share with the nation, and we must all unite. That is the first great task. The problem is changing the mentality. Even though the government already made that call, the FSLN wants to make that call to support the government, calling on all sectors of the nation—producers, merchants, everyone—to change their mentality.

However, we know there are people—enemies of the revolution who are encouraged by the rightists and the U.S. Embassy, and so forth—who will continue speculating. The struggle must be against the speculators and everyone who increases prices. I believe there are neither "big ones" nor "small ones."

Therefore, we must all try to see how we can all change: Some will stop being the "suckers," falling into the hands of the speculators; others should not be so "unscrupulous," trying to crush the people. The struggle is against the speculators, and there are neither "big ones" nor "small ones," although, naturally, we must fight more against the "big ones." It is easier for the state to fight the "big ones," because it knows where to find the big merchants, the wholesalers, the large vendors. The state can and is prepared to exercise control over them. However, the small speculator contributes to this issue, and the masses must struggle against the small speculator.

How? First, the masses' refusal to buy will force them to lower their prices. A merchant makes his living from a cycle of selling, reselling, buying, selling, buying, selling; and if you do not buy from him, he cannot continue this cycle. The other way is to pressure him into selling at official prices, or at reasonable prices in case there are no official prices posted and the state has not yet issued some guidelines. Naturally, we cannot demand this of the small merchant, because he will not survive.

The masses must mobilize in that direction, but must do so within the law. I believe it is a good idea to go shopping in a group, as a "gang." Let the whole neighborhood go, or get a large group to go shopping together, because that helps. If a single person goes to buy something, the heartless merchant, the speculator, could wield a knife. However, if 10 people show up simultaneously to

buy—then if he wields a knife at the 10 people, 9 will stay, 1 goes immediately to call MICOIN [Ministry of Domestic Trade], and the police will see to it that the law is obeyed.

This is not a matter of slipping into vandalism, but of having the law obeyed. What has happened? Perhaps somebody goes to a grocery store to buy something and he is asked to pay an outrageous price for a product. The person goes alone to telephone MICOIN or the police, and, when they arrive, they are told there is no such product. However, if there are 9 or 10 people there, and a group stays guarding the store while one person goes to call, the owner of the store cannot hide the products. That is why we need social action.

Now, then, it would be an ideal situation if we did not have to resort to this, if the merchants would stop speculating. This sounds like utopia, but we must make a patriotic call to action. Some people say—and that is what the rightists argue—that "poor things, that is how they make a living." There is enough work here for everyone. For example, Commander Dora Maria Tellez told me that 2,000 workers are needed in the MINSA [Ministry of Health]. In other words, if someone wants to make a living, he does not have to sell products, because he can go work at the MINSA. There are many factories that need workers. MIDINRA [Ministry of Agricultural-Livestock Development and Agrarian Reform] has strategic projects, such as the project at Chiltepe. Since it was unable to get all the workers it needed, the ministry gave convicts the opportunity to go work there to earn money to help their families, even though they are prisoners. This happens because workers are unavailable in Chiltepe. I believe the Victoria de Julio mill still has staffing problems. In other words, nobody can say here that he is selling goods because he does not have any other way of making a living and putting food on the table. There is work to be done, and the salaries cover the basic food requirements. We will protect the prices of the basic foods needed. The fewer merchants there are the less speculation there will be, and, therefore, salaries will be worth more...

BARRICADA: You were saying the FSLN had to work on this task. However, how can one wage that "economic guerrilla warfare" within the framework of Esquipulas and existing freedoms? What happens to the legal foundation of the country?

Arce: That is why I say the action of the masses must be within a legal framework. It cannot be outside the law. Now, if the right here has the right—because freedoms have become available as a result of the prospects for peace that have opened up with Esquipulas, although peace was not won—to say what it wants and to do what it wants, the people also have the right to say what they want and to do what they want. Freedom is for everyone, not only for the rightists. Freedom is for all of society. Thus, if they mobilize, the people can mobilize. If they criticize and say harsh things—even against the revolutionary state, against the FSLN—then the people and the FSLN have the right to respond to their charges in kind, as long as we continue to abide by the law. This is an important aspect of the question you are asking. Our members must clearly understand that our struggle must be waged within a legal framework, as we have been doing. The FSLN respects the law, all laws, and we must continue to do so.

BARRICADA: Within this state-people-party effort, what is the tangible evidence of a coherent state economic policy? Much has been said about a 5-percent reduction in nonmilitary EPS expenses, for example, and about government reductions. Can more be expected?

Arce: Right now the government is studying ways to reduce defense spending, and, although this is the most sensitive issue, it is being studied. The EPS and the Interior Ministry—where you will find humble people who experience the same difficulties as the rest of the population, with great spiritedness and awareness—are right now reviewing ways to reduce their expenses without affecting the war. If we can do it in the area of defense, you can very well understand that we are also doing it in other areas of the state budget by seeking ways to make deep cuts in spending.

Besides, something is happening here similar to what we discussed clandestinely about a principle of the statutes that referred to FSLN members' conscientious discipline. Some understood conscientious discipline to be the fact that no one had to impose discipline on another, because one did things because one was conscientious. We had to discuss this with many cadres and explain to them that conscientious discipline means conscientiously accepting that discipline. Something similar is happening now with the state. These economic policies could and should force the state to save more, because the state's capacity to import is reduced by virtue of these measures, while at the same time it seeks to reduce public expenses.

BARRICADA: Do you believe state enterprises will have enough discipline to respect the set prices? Everyone knows managers raise prices to increase profits. It is a temptation.

Arce: I am going to tell you that Commander Jaime Wheelock told me that by order of President Ortega, he met with the directors of the country's state enterprises on Sunday to speak clearly to them about the new rules of the game. He told them they must set prices and present their price proposals with a reasonable profit margin, because they are not there to make profits, but to benefit the people and to prevent them from resorting to the black market. Commander Wheelock gave them a clear and definite explanation about the new measures and the important role they must play in the state

enterprises. He also warned them that those who want to appear as great managers by making profits, because they are throwing things to the black market, are actually increasing prices.

In other words, that task has already been started; I understand the government is creating a structure to allow greater control over that. A cycle of meetings has already started. Yesterday, I read in the newspapers that a meeting was held with agricultural producers to discuss the prices of products and raw materials and the entire economic dynamics. However, we believe this matter must be construed as an effort by the entire nation.

You mentioned the effort by the state, the people, and the party. I would like to leave the party out of it; I would like this to be an effort by the state, the people, and all of the country's organized forces, whether they be Sandinists, socialists, communists, Social Christians, Liberals, etc. Let us truly show we are interested in the welfare of the people and their living standard, but we are not fomenting economic instability. We are not causing the dollar to go one way and prices another. We are not encouraging or defending businessmen.

I conducted a study of the paper LA PRENSA. From the time it reappeared until the monetary measures were adopted, it had published 27 in-depth articles on the country's economic problem. In those 27 articles the newspaper asked for those measures. Now that we have undertaken those measures, the newspaper has begun a campaign against them. Instead, it should have said: At last, the government listened to us!

BARRICADA: To what do you attribute LA PRENSA's inconsistency?

Arce: I attribute it to the idea that LA PRENSA is not acting as a newspaper that is responsible to society but as one that acts as an agent of foreign policies against the revolution. Last Saturday, I stated that first the newspaper endorsed amnesty because it expected the contras would get funds, and it wanted to provide them with fighters. Since that did not happen, it forgot about the inmates. Then it launched a campaign against the Patriotic Military Service. However, the recruitment period ended. The quotas have been more than fulfilled. The boys are already at their training centers, and others are being discharged. Thus, the paper is attacking the economy while defending price gougers. It is depicting them as "poor little guys." "These poor little guys are being deprived of the products they use to make a living"— by stealing from the people. Instead, LA PRENSA should have said: "Why, the government listened to us. Our 27 articles calling on the government to revise its economic policies had an impact." These were outright articles; or interviews with members of the Higher Council of Private Enterprise, INSAC, and INSIEP [not further identified]; or many things they have invented. That should be its attitude right now instead of saying the measures do not work. That is why we must call on everyone to close ranks on this matter. Moreover, if the paper does not accompany the people and the state in this program, the FSLN will.

BARRICADA: In sum, Commander Arce, what is on the FSLN's agenda?

Arce: To produce with a maximum of efficiency and care; to be an example in terms of the work done, labor discipline, productivity, and in terms of a tenacious and ceaseless struggle against price gougers, without forsaking the military defense of the revolution until we achieve peace.

Cardenal on Education System, Situation

PY251830 Montevideo LA HORA, International News Supplement, in Spanish 14 Feb 88 p 6

[Report on interview with Education Minister Fernando Cardenal by LA HORA reporter Jose Luis Martinez—date and place not given]

[Text] Nicaraguan Education Minister Fernando Cardenal recently visited our country, bringing a personal letter from President Daniel Ortega to his Uruguayan counterpart, Julio Maria Sanguinetti, asking the Contadora and Contadora Support Group countries to verify "in situ" the fulfillment of agreements the Sandinist government signed at Esquipulas II and at the summit of five Central American presidents.

During that visit, LA HORA interviewed the Nicaraguan minister on the current Nicaraguan education system, taking into account the fact that the country is facing a war that has been going on since the popular government's ascent to power.

Cardenal stated: "We could define the situation in my country, considering the great economic difficulties we are enduring due to the military aggression and the economic blockade, as advanced in quality and quantity."

The minister, who is also a priest, stated that one-third of the Nicaraguan population "is attending school. This means we are very close to the level of the most developed Latin American countries."

He added that this has been achieved with a great deal of effort "and despite the fact that we are at war."

He recalled that the Sandinist revolution has set the goal of including all people of the country into the national education program, and at the same time to develop a new education system "that will destroy all structures of the old education system, by which a unilateral flow of information is imposed by the teacher on the student as if the latter were a mere object."

Cardenal stated: "What we want is critical participation of students; what we are carrying out now is what some Latin American educators call a popular education."

The minister added that the term popular education not only means an education at the service of the people, but also entails a critical and liberating participation.

He said his country is enduring the economic and military aggression of the "great northern power," and this is why it has to use a large portion of its budget on defense. Nevertheless, the educational program is developing.

The Sandinist minister explained that the Nicaraguan Government has been invited to participate in advisory departments, in the educational sector, in Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, and Austria.

He added that the Nicaraguan experience in education will be explained in Mexico and Cuba, which shows how successful it is.

Asked about the active participation of priests and other religious people in the revolutionary process, many of them holding government posts, he said, "a priest should be seriously questioned when, seeing a revolution looking for justice, brotherhood, and the manner to do good things for the people, and a revolution that transmits the values of the gospels, he does nothing about it."

He added: We ask ourselves how some priests, who are cooperating with the exploitation of the people and of the poor, can continue being accomplices.

The normal thing, he added, is that a priest, a Christian, a believer within a country that is conducting a popular revolution to give power to workers and peasants, will participate in the process with the poor.

Cardenal stressed the peace process which is being sought through Contadora and its Support Group and through the meeting of the five Central American countries.

He said if we did not have the obstacle of the U.S. President, "we would have achieved peace by now, or we would be very close to it."

He said: "For the U.S. President, Nicaragua is a bad example from two points of view. First of all, Nicaragua achieved its independence from the United States on 19 July 1979, because during the Somoza dictatorship our country was a colony of the United States, and the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN) gave it that independence."

He said the United States is doing what England did 200 years ago, trying to subjugate Nicaragua to make it obedient, and it is doing so with the use of mercenaries of the "counterrevolution."

The other reason Reagan would attack Nicaragua is that we are making a popular revolution, a bad example, according to the United States, for the Central American region, he added.

The empire cannot allow the self-determination and sovereignty of the peoples, he concluded.

In addition to being an education minister, Cardenal is a Jesuit priest; deputy rector of the Central American University; founder of the Nicaraguan Human Rights Commission; and he has a master's degree in arts, theological philosophy, and psychopedagogy. He is national coordinator of the national literacy crusade.

PCdeN's Altamirano Urges Dialogue Resumption

PA251610 Managua Radio Catolica in Spanish 1300 GMT 23 Feb 88

[Text] Eli Altamirano Perez, secretary general of the Communist Party of Nicaragua [PCdeN], has stressed the need for resuming talks with the Sandinists. He also applauded the mediation of His Eminence Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo in the efforts to organize a cease-fire with the Nicaraguan Resistance forces.

In a statement for "The Church" newscast, Altamirano said the media should start using proper language and not encourage hatred among social and political groups.

Let us hear Altamirano's statement.

[Begin recording] [Altamirano] I believe the president of the Republic, the other members of the FSLN's National Directorate, and progovernment journalists should end their usual chain of slanders. That practice should be stopped and should be replaced with efforts centered on overcoming the country's current crisis. The national dialogue should be resumed as soon as possible. The 14 opposition political parties have never changed their attitude toward the dialogue. As far as I know, all the parties, including ours, are willing to continue the talks. I understand the talks were suspended temporarily, because the government refused to reply to the 18 constitutional amendments proposed as necessary conditions for the country's democratization. To date, there has not been a positive reply.

I believe the country needs to be democratized, and we must achieve peace. To accomplish those goals it is necessary to resume the talks and make a great effort to create the political basis for building a [words indistinct] and durable peace. At the same time, those same amendments, democratization, and peace will contribute to the nation's patriotic unity so all the country's forces can together reconstruct the nation and move ahead. It is up to the president of the Republic. He is the one who should reply to the proposed amendments. The dialogue can be resumed with a positive reply. We are ready to resume the talks whenever that occurs, which we hope will be as soon as possible.

[Reporter] Comrade Altamirano, will the installation of the National Assembly's fourth legislative period contribute to the national dialogue, or are they two different things?

[Altamirano] They are two different things. Of course, as a result of the magnitude of the political, economic, and social crisis, the problem of the proposed reforms must be handled aside from the parliament. It is basically a political problem; therefore, it requires a political solution, an agreement or commitment that should result from a wide discussion between the government and the opposition parties. The National Assembly is the state's legislative branch. Once an agreement is reached in the national dialogue regarding the main aspects and (?contents) of the constitutional amendments, the president will of course have to submit them to the National Assembly so they can be duly processed. [end recording]

Panama

President Delvalle Relieves Noriega of Command

PA252357 Panama City Panavision Television in Spanish 2215 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Speech by President Eric Arturo Delvalle at the Presidential Palace in Panama City—live or recorded]

[Text] Panama is currently living through one of the most difficult and dangerous moments in its history. It is regrettable that after having attained success a few years ago, with the world's assistance and blessing, in Panama's struggle for sovereignty; after having begun a transition toward a promised democracy; and after having set, even more recently, its stagnant economy into motion again, the country today is virtually under economic siege by external pressures and sanctions. Its prestige as a nation is the target of the harshest criticisms, and the gains made by several generations of Panamanians are in grave danger of being seriously affected.

What has led us to such a terrible crossroads in such a short time? It has certainly been a degree of irresponsibility on the part of many; exaggerated ambitions on the part of some people; and great misunderstanding on the part of others, which have decisively contributed to placing us in such a critical and serious situation.

When the Republican Party, which I am honored to head, decided to enter the political arena again in 1984, following 16 years in which there were no elections, it did so convinced that General Omar Torrijos' promise to our nation—and to the nations on the continent that helped him conclude the Torrijos-Carter Treaties—to restore the democratic regime in Panama would be fulfilled. Our party reentered politics convinced it could contribute effectively to the completion and consolidation of this necessary stage in our political affairs.

Later, circumstances led me to occupy the position of president in September 1985. Since then I have set out to make every effort and sacrifice within my power to promote the country's integral development and to firmly set it on the path toward a stable and permanent democracy, one that will ensure changes in the exercise of power through an honest tally of freely cast votes.

I must honestly confess that in my unwavering effort to fulfill my goals, I may have made some mistakes, but it is even worse to be the victim—as I have been—of so much misunderstanding. This has not changed the actions I carry out with a deep love for my homeland. It also has not reduced my interest in contributing my efforts to achieving the highest possible standard of living for all of my compatriots, and most particularly for the neediest.

For this reason, I have sadly observed that many of the successes I had achieved have been vanishing over these last 8 months, thus turning my tireless efforts into fruitless hopes. Unfortunately for all, most of the forces active in the country—both in the government and the opposition—have not been able or have not wished to understand the enormous difficulties involved in such efforts, nor the sincere willingness and the degree of sacrifice that are necessary—not only on my part but on the part of all the nation's sectors—to achieve such important and vital goals.

The truth is that the wrong stands, the arbitrary actions, the regrettable omissions, and the misdeeds now or in the past have led to extremely significant developments. Examples of these are the substantial slowdown in social and economic development we experienced until mid-1987, the economic pressures and sanctions against us, and the serious charges two federal courts in Florida have levied against the Panama Defense Forces [FDP] commander in chief. These are charges that have been picked up and widely disseminated by the international media, with resulting damage to our nation's image and prestige.

The actions that sectors of the U.S. Government have taken and continue to take against Panama on the pretext that our nation does not possess and is not moving toward a true democratic process, as well as the charges that have been brought against the commander in chief of the Panamanian Armed Forces, are beginning to be reflected in an unfavorable financial and diplomatic international attitude toward the Panamanian nation. This attitude undoubtedly places the Republic at very serious risk. This is a situation in which the present and future well-being of the Panamanian people, as well as the very fundamental bases of our lifestyle, are at stake.

In the face of this enormous responsibility that falls upon me as the president of the nation, to safeguard the physical, moral, and economic health of the Panamanian people, as well as the greatness and the image of the

fatherland, I concluded a few days ago that I should, as I indeed did, suggest to General Manuel Antonio Noriega that he voluntarily withdraw from his high post until such time as there has been an investigation of the charges that have been made against him, and the truth is known. This would be for his own sake, and for the tranquillity and health of the Republic.

I have seen no evidence that the healthy objectives which led to the suggestion I have described have been at all well received. I considered it prudent to wait a few days to give Gen Noriega sufficient time to ponder the seriousness of the situation facing him and to which he is subjecting the nation.

Even if one believes that the charges against Gen Noriega are political in nature, one cannot ignore the internal situation in the country, which becomes more complex and dangerous every day. There will be no peace, freedom, or progress in Panama, and we will not be able to perfect and consolidate our democratic system, unless we rise above the passions that have been unleashed and erase all doubts about the events that concern us. If we fail to display the generosity and patriotic commitment that present circumstances require, and if the misunderstandings we are currently experiencing prevail, we could fall into an irrevocable and deep economic, political, and social crisis that would shake the very roots of the Republic. This crisis could also threaten the basic achievements of an entire people who for many years have been trying to form their nation through lengthy, patriotic struggles. No Panamanian has the right to imperil these.

To avoid this, and to find adequate solutions to the serious crisis that looms over our institutional life and our economic stability, it is necessary for the country to return as soon as possible to the conditions and normalcy to which it is accustomed, and which have always been one of its main legacies, admired by all.

The highest prelates of our Catholic Church have already made pronouncements on various occasions concerning the events that the country is experiencing. They have expressed their deep concern over the serious tragedy that could result. We know that in its pastoral mission, the church has no earthly interest other than propagating the Christian faith, based on love of God and one's neighbor. Therefore, I share the prelates' concern, because the fate of the Panamanian people is at stake.

There cannot continue to be motives for a continued confrontation between brothers, the threat of a class struggle, and public disturbances, with their resulting repression to maintain public order. There must be an end to abuses of the freedoms consecrated in the Constitution, and an end to the unjustified curtailment of those freedoms, so that a climate of law and order can prevail instead of a climate of violence. The causes that lead us to fiscal and economic collapse and that subject thousands of Panamanians to unemployment, misery, and desperation cannot continue to exist. There cannot continue to be reasons for the international credit organizations and international banks, which have always cooperated with us, to turn their backs on us and thereby aggravate our already weak and precarious situation. Attitudes and behavior that justify having friendly nations of this continent and of the world take stands that isolate our country and discredit our fatherland cannot continue to exist. In sum, we cannot persist in incubating our own disaster, regardless of the pretext, reason, or justification given by any entity, group, or person. This is because nothing and no one is greater than the good of the fatherland. In view of the great seriousness of the aforementioned situation, and in view of the failure of my persuasive efforts to effect a comprehensive and coordinated action with the commander in chief of our Armed Forces, I have no alternative but, in exercising the powers conferred upon me by the Constitution, to separate Gen Noriega from his high post, and to have Colonel Marcos Justines, the present chief of staff, take command of the institution, to allow justice to follow its impartial course without pressure of any kind.

Over the past 20 years, the Defense Forces have played an especially important role in national life. As an institution, they have grown in organization, experience, and professionalism, and for this they are respected. However, the Defense Forces must not forget the sacred duties imposed on them by the Constitution, which states that in addition to maintaining public order and defending the national territory's integrity, they must respect and ensure respect for the Republic's institutions and constitutional branches.

At this serious moment the fatherland is experiencing, the behavior the Defense Forces adopt could either strengthen the institution and heighten its prestige, thus making it earn history's verdict of praise, or instead stain its emblems and banners with the brashness of a renewed armed imposition. The present and future of the Panamanian people, which all the members of the Defense Forces are part of, and the integrity and health of the fatherland in which they were born, lies in the hands of the Defense Forces' dignified military conduct, and in the patriotic awareness of each of its members. I trust that the position I have been forced to adopt to safeguard the nation will be understood by all, both adversaries and friends, and that it will open the doors to sincere and true national concord.

This is not the time for hatred, resentment, or euphoria. All Panamanians, regardless of their political affiliation, must devote themselves to working for the fatherland, to finding solutions to our serious problems, and to completing with faith and zeal the building of that real and effective democracy chosen by our forebears when they founded the Republic as the best system of government. Thank you.

Advises Justines

PA260042 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0003 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpt] Panama City, 25 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—President Eric Delvalle called Colonel Marcos Justines 10 minutes before delivering his speech to tell him of his decision to remove General Manuel Antonio Noriega from his post. Justines, however, asked him to wait a period of time.

The information was revealed by President Delvalle a few minutes ago at his private residence in this capital.

Delvalle addressed the nation through a national network and announced his decision to remove Noriega from his post due to his indictment by a U.S. court for alleged links with international drug trafficking and extortion.

The president said that, in "adopting this critical decision," he did not have the support of officers of the Panamanian Defense Forces, "much less the U.S. Government." [passage omitted]

Explains Decision, Asks Support

PA260302 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0143 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpt] Panama City, 25 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—President Eric Arturo Delvalle has told ACAN-EFE after announcing General Manuel Antonio Noriega's dismissal that he expects the Panama Defense Forces [FDP] to accept his decision because he is the FDP's top chief.

Delvalle informed Colonel Marcos Justines, chief of the FDP General Staff, of his decision to dismiss Gen Noriega, but Justines asked him for "a waiting period."

Delvalle made the statements half an hour after announcing Noriega's dismissal over an impromptu natiowide network and as a result of Noriega's indictment by grand juries in Miami and Tampa (United States) for alleged involvement in international drug trafficking and extortion.

Delvalle said that when he made "this delicate decision," he did not ask for backing from the Panamanian military or from the U.S. Government.

"Frankly, I have talked to no one, because, if I had done so, it would have been an act of disloyalty to them, to their leaders.

"I acted on my own on the basis of the powers vested in me by the Constitution, and, as president of the Republic, I demand that the Armed Forces support, respect, and honor their mission, which is to watch over and enforce compliance with the laws," the president said.

"I have not made any decision," he added. [sentence as received] "I am going to stay with my friends to talk, to reflect on the steps I am going to take next, because this country is seriously injured, seriously divided. I think this is the right time to call for a grand national agreement under which we may have political differences, but respect our opponents and unite the Panamanian family again."

He added that he hopes "Gen Noriega will understand what I have done." It is even for the general's own good, Delvalle added, because he [Delvalle] has accompanied the FDP for almost 2 and 1/2 years trying to find a solution to the country's problems, "which is being blocked and prevented."

Delvalle does not know what the "strongman's" reaction may be, "but I think it would be very unfortunate if he (Noriega) tries to avoid complying with the decision I have made." [passage omitted]

Said To Request OAS Support

PA260211 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0145 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Washington, 25 Feb (EFE)—Tomorrow Panamanian President Eric Arturo Delvalle will request an urgent meeting of the OAS Permanent Council to request its members' support for his decision to remove General Manuel Antonio Noriega from the post of Defense Forces commander in chief.

Panamanian opposition leader Gabriel Lewis announced Delvalle's decision this evening following a telephone conversation with the president.

According to Lewis, the Panamanian president will also dismiss Roberto Leyton, ambassador to the OAS, and replace him with Lawrence Chewning Fabrega.

Chewning Fabrera presented his resignation as alternate ambassador to the OAS and protested the instructions he received to defend Gen Noriega against drug trafficking charges. However, his resignation was not accepted.

According to the sources, Delvalle is expected to avail himself of the OAS Permanent Council's meeting to announce that Noriega has not heeded the order for his dismissal, and to request the support of the Latin American states.

Abadia Removed, Bazan Named

PA260548 Madrid EFE in Spanish 0415 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Panamanian opposition leader Gabriel Lewis Galindo told EFE today, after a telephone conversation with President Eric Arturo Delvalle, that Delvalle had dismissed Foreign Minister Jorge Abadia and replaced him with Dominador Kayser Bazan, former Panamanian ambassador to the United States.

Lewis Galindo added that the Panamanian president, who is at his home accompanied by the nuncio, Sebastian Laboa, and U.S. Ambassador Arthur Davis, also decided to appoint Jose Blandon as new ambassador to the United Nations.

Juan Sosa will remain as ambassador to the White House, while Lewis himself was named special ambassador, the leader of the Panamanian opposition in Washington said.

Today Delvalle dismissed Panama's "strongman" Manuel Antonio Noriega from his post as head of the Panama Defense Forces, but high ranking commanders [words indistinct].

Fires Cabinet Ministers, Envoys

PA261124 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1027 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpts] Panama City, 26 Feb (EFE)—Panama began the day today with a new president, Manuel Solis Palma, formerly minister of education until this point, thus clearing up Panama's political panorama following 11 hours of intense political tension. [passage omitted]

Solis, who is economist, educator, and sociologist, went into exile when the late General Omar Torrijos staged a coup d'etat that ended the Presidency of Arnulfo Arias Madrid, the octogenarian leader of the Authentic Panamenist Party who lost the May 1984 presidential elections by a narrow margin. [passage omitted]

Delvalle, who remained in power for 2 years and 5 months after taking office on 29 September 1985 following the ouster of then President Nicolas Ardito Barletta, asserted that the Defense Forces are destroying the banking and financial center that provides one of the main services Panama renders. [passage omitted]

Despite his removal, Delvalle has fired 10 of his cabinet ministers and several ambassadors. He has also appointed Gabriel Lewis Galindo and Lawrence Chewning Fabrega as itinerant ambassador and ambassador to the OAS, respectively. [passage omitted]

In addition, Delvalle announced that he has replaced Jorge Abadia Arias, the incumbent minister of foreign relations, with Kayser Bazan, former Panamanian ambassador to the United States. [passage omitted]

If Delvalle's efforts bear fruit, the OAS foreign ministers will probably meet today to review the situation in Panama, which is experiencing one of the worst political crises of its history.

Assembly To Discuss Dismissal of President

PA260502 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0421 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Statement read by Alberto Aleman Boyd, president of the National Assembly, at the Presidential Palace—live]

[Text] Messrs presidents of the parties that make up the UNADE, Messrs ministers, honorable legislators, Messrs members of the various parties:

Today an event has occurred that definitely marks a milestone at which all the parties that comprise the UNADE, as well the legislators and the Legislative Assembly, must make a decision.

Faced with the pronouncement made by Mr Eric Arturo Delvalle, president of the Republic, in which he suspended General Manuel Antonio Noriega from office, thereby violating certain constitutional provisions, it is necessary that at this decisive moment for the country, at which the dignity, peace, and tranquillity of the nation and of those of us who represent the majority of Panamanians are at stake, the National Assembly must take a firm position. To this end, I will read the following communique:

The Legislative Assembly, in its position as representative of the Panamanian people, whose members have been chosen by popular vote, has the duty to adopt the necessary measures to guarantee the constitutional continuity of the country, particularly at a time when, by virtue of pressure from abroad, an attempt is being made to cause economic, political, and social destabilization, to the detriment of the Panamanian people and of national independence and dignity. Consequently, by its sovereign will, the Legislative Assembly decided to hold a session to examine the situation and exercise its functions with the speed the circumstances require.

Today, the organization I head has adopted the measures it has considered necessary, taking into consideration the fact that the country's integrity, peace, and security have been imperiled. Therefore, we make the following statement: The Legislative Assembly, beginning at 2330 [0430 GMT] tonight, will meet to discuss the resolution that will remove President Eric Arturo Delvalle and Vice President Dr Roderick Esquivel from office. We will adhere to Article 184 of the Constitution.

In view of the aforegoing, I wish to invite you all to accompany us to the Legislative Palace for this historic session, which marks the beginning of the momentous event in our country in which the Legislative Assembly, as the people's ultimate means of expression, will ensure respect for the nation's will. Thank you very much.

Solis Proposed as New President

PA260725 Paris AFP in Spanish 0714 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Panama City, 26 Feb (AFP)—The cabinet ministers tonight proposed that Education Minister Manuel Solis Palma be appointed as Panama's new president to replace Eric Delvalle, who was deposed by the Legislative Assembly today.

The proposal will be discussed at daybreak today by the Legislative Assembly, which will then proceed to appoint Solis, a 61-year-old politician and educator.

Delvalle, Esquivel Dismissed

PA260824 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 0558 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Resolution passed during an extraordinary session of the Legislative Assembly on 26 February—read by Assembly Secretary Erasmo Pinilla]

[Text] The Honorable Legislators Guillermo Jimenez, Cesar Pardo, Argenida de Barrios, Jerry Wilson, Virgilio Saenz, Arcadio Martinez, Celso Carrizo, Gustavo Nelson Collado, Eben Chi Rodriguez, Hugo Giraud, Luis Navas, Magdalena Rodriguez de Duran, Francisco Javier Solis, Arturo Alvarado, Anselmo Lino Guaynora, Eusebio Pedroza, Romelia de Pardo, Otilio Miranda, Diana Arosemena de Ozores, Antonio Ardines, Tomas Altamirano Duque, Pedro Brin Martinez, Rafael Clemente Abrego, Hugo Torrijos, Jorge Simmons, Rigoberto Paredes, Martin Serrano, and other illegible signatures, propose:

In view of the attitudes of the president and vice president, the undersigned group of UNADE deputies, following instructions from our respective political parties, submit the following resolution to consideration by this Assembly:

Resolution:

The Legislative Assembly, considering:

That yesterday, 25 February 1988, President Eric Arturo Delvalle removed General Manuel Antonio Noriega, FDP commander in chief, from his post, and in so doing did not take into account any of the formalities demanded by the national Constitution and the Defense Forces Law;

That this act has been carried out in direct violation of Article 179 of the national Constitution, which stipulates that the president can appoint the chiefs and officers of the public force only in accordance with the military roster;

That in his public statements, as he dismissed Gen Noriega, the president said this measure was being taken because the FDP commander in chief had been indicted by a court in the United States, which means because of actions carried out by officials of a foreign government;

That this behavior by the president had the purpose of allowing U.S. Government intervention in Panamanian domestic affairs, and therefore places him under Subparagraph 3 of Article 186 of the national Constitution;

That the above described behavior is harmful to the national sovereignty, places the country's peace and security in jeopardy, and violates the national Constitution;

That, in addition, Vice President Roderick Esquivel abandoned his post as of 8 September 1987, violating the Constitution and the laws, leaving his work unattended and failing to fulfill his duties;

That such behavior is an express violation of Subparagraph 2 of Article 180 of the Constitution; and

That the Legislative Assembly is the highest representative body and consequently represents the people's sovereign will;

Resolves:

1. To dismiss the president and vice president of the Republic, Eric Arturo Delvalle and Roderick Esquivel, from their posts for violation of the Constitution of the Republic.

2. To urge the ministers of state, in accordance with Article 184 of the Constitution, to proceed to appoint a minister to be in charge of the presidency of the Republic.

3. To instruct the FDP to take the necessary measures to guarantee civil peace, public order, and the integrity of the Republic.

Issued in Panama City on 26 February 1988

Signed, Alberto Aleman Boyd, President of the Legislative Assembly, and Erasmo Pinilla C., Assembly Secretary

Solis Appointed President

PA260939 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0810 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Resolution No 14 approved by the Panamanian Cabinet Council session held on 26 February 1988 in Panama City; read by Legislative Assembly Secretary Erasmo Pinilla—live]

[Text] Whereas:

The Legislative Assembly has informed this Cabinet Council that with Resolution No 1 of 26 February 1988 [which dismissed Eric Arturo Delvalle and Roderick Esquivel], the Legislative Assembly proceeded to dismiss Messrs Eric Arturo Delvalle and Roderick Esquivel as president and vice president of the Republic for violating the political Constitution of the Republic of Panama.

This action causes an absolute vacuum in the post of president and vice president of the Republic, meaning that action must be taken in accordance with Article 184, paragraph 3 of the political Constitution:

When for any reason the absolute absence of the president cannot be filled by the vice presidents, one of the ministers of state will carry out the duties of the presidency. The ministers of state will elect this person by majority vote. He must meet the necessary requirements to be president of the Republic, and will possess the title minister in charge of the Presidency of the Republic.

The Cabinet Council, in exercising its constitutional powers, resolves:

Article 1. To elect Manuel Solis Palma, minister of education, as minister in charge of the Presidency of the Republic.

Article 2. This resolution will take effect beginning on this date.

Release and publish.

Issued in Panama City on 26 February 1988

Signed by:

Rodolfo Chiari De Leon, minister of government and justice

Jorge Abadia Arias, minister of foreign relations

Hector Alexander, minister of finance and treasury

Manuel Solis Palma, minister of education

Rogelio Dumanoir, minister of public works

Hirisnel Sucre, minister of agricultural development

Eduardo A. Reyes Vargas, acting minister of health

Ricardo Bermudez, minister of housing

Azael Purcait, acting minister of planning and economic policy

Nander A. Pitti Velasquez, minister of the presidency

Solis Gives Acceptance Speech

PA261029 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0818 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Speech by Manuel Solis Palma, appointed minister in charge of the Presidency, at the Legislative Assembly session at the Legislative Palace in Panama City—live]

[Text] His excellency, Honorable Legislator Alberto Aleman Boyd, president of the Legislative Assembly; Her Excellency Marisol Reyes de Vasquez, president of the Supreme Court of Justice; their excellencies messrs ministers of state; their excellencies comptroller general and assistant comptroller general of the Republic; Her Excellency Yolanda Pulice de Rodriguez, president of the Electoral Tribunal; gentlemen members of the political parties supporting Panama's current revolutionary process [applause]; gentlemen directors and assistant directors of the state's autonomous and semiautonomous agencies; honorable legislators; gentlemen members of the national and international press; fellow citizens:

Our country has found itself led into an institutional crisis, and the existing differences among various sectors of Panamanians concerning the approach to national problems has contributed to worsening the situation. This situation was initially created by the United States' interest in causing some Panamanians to lose our traditional position of dignity and sovereignty.

A smear campaign against our nation and its institutions has even led several sectors to accept as valid the juridical actions of another state and to yield to the economic, diplomatic, and propaganda pressures that expressed the plans conceived by the State Department. Our peace, territorial integrity, and democratization process have been endangered. The path has been opened to violent sedition and a confrontation between Panamanians.

The Panamanian response to the economic aggression has been weakened due to paralysis on the part of the state and the setting aside of the Torrijist method of consultation and dialogue...[applause and shouts] and participation of popular sectors. What has been done, instead, is to enter into agreements with backward groups and with international financial organizations, without seeking alternatives other than those offered by the U.S. economic scheme for our country. [shouts]

First of all, we reaffirm our goal of bringing to a culmination the generational struggle of the Panamanian nation by demanding compliance with the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. We will march onward to the full recovery of our sovereignty in the year 2000. [applause, shouts] Starting today, Panama resumes the policies of nonalignment and the free determination of peoples. [applause, shouts] In this regard, we again request the U.S. Government to maintain normal commercial and diplomatic relations, based on full respect for Panamanian sovereignty and dignity. [applause]

Our country will maintain its policy of support for the Esquipulas agreements and peace, for nonintervention by foreign powers, and for respect for legally constituted governments. We propose to return to full-fledged Torrijism. [applause and shouts of: Omar, Omar!] We plan to do this in a democracy with the participation of all social sectors interested in national independence and improvement.

It becomes necessary to carry democratic development further, without any exceptions, with full respect for any and all sectors and groups that in good faith wish to participate in the country's political and economic activities. The electoral process will not stop. The electoral schedule that will culminate with honest and free elections in 1989 will have to be respected. [applause] The electoral tribunal will receive all the financial and administrative support needed to fulfill its duties.

We fervently call upon all political sectors to actively participate in reviewing the electoral code, and to adopt the needed internal organizational measures to guarantee a full, partisan, and national democracy. We promise that the administration will become a modern and efficient organization that will give timely answers to the challenges confronting the nation, especially our most needy sectors.

In view of the crisis caused by U.S. economic aggression, the country will have to prepare itself to make whatever contribution may be needed to propitiate national integrity and development. It should not be necessary to adopt economic policies that will entail accepting gifts that only serve to compromise our dignity and our sovereignty. [applause] These contributions do not mean that the burden of the measures will be borne by everyone, much less by our nation's poor. It is imperative to maintain as much as possible the social gains attained during the development of the Torrijist process. Those who have more will have to contribute more to the general welfare. [applause, shouts]

Therefore, the economic measures that must be adopted will have to be analyzed. All sectors must take part in this analysis. The search for the solution to our economic and financial problems demands the participation of all sectors. Labor-management relations must be improved so that economic and social solutions will bring greater productivity to all sectors, which will contribute their efforts to the national economy. The solutions must be reached by means of a dialogue among the popular, professional, managerial, and government sectors.

We have always respected the dignity and welfare of foreigners who visit us or coexist with us. Right now our hospitality makes it necessary to even more carefully protect without exception all the foreigners who reside in our country. Therefore, we guarantee the welfare of foreign citizens and their property, particularly well-meaning U.S. citizens. We also fully guarantee the security of the operations of banks and the private sector, including national and foreign banks.

The free passage of vessels from all nations through our canal has always been guaranteed by our people and government. The Panamanians' attitude represents the only true defense for this international waterway, because they realize this enterprise for world welfare represents a resource that will revert to our control in 1999. This will mark the final phase of the implementation of the Torrijos-Carter Treaties. [shouts, applause]

All the necessary guarantees for an uninterrupted operation of the canal will be given. We reassert our decision to maintain unity between the FDP, the people, and the government. [shouts, applause] We strongly reassert our military's leading role in the defense of our national sovereignty and independence, and in carrying out the national liberation process.

We wish to conclude with a message to all our fellow countrymen. Our nation has withstood difficult moments caused by international pressure. Nevertheless, we are encouraged about the security of our future. The unity of all Panamanians—without distinction as to classes, ideologies, or selfish party interests—will allow us to seek our future with hope. National dignity must prevail above personal and group interests. Our goal is to achieve full sovereignty in our country, which should guide us in these crucial moments of our country's history.

I am fully aware of the responsibility I assume in this government. It is the result of a consensus among the parties supporting the government, and this guarantees the efficient and adequate handling of state affairs. Modern democracy is not possible without the participation of all sectors that comprise a state. The Defense Forces' participation in vital issues concerning security, order, and peace therefore does not necessarily imply the civil government's submission to the military. This participation is part of the united efforts we need to solve the multiple problems of the Panamanian state and to fulfill our pledges. [applause]

We seek to achieve full harmony among the state's branches; that is, the executive, judicial, and legislative branches. This will allow us to assume our responsibility in a way that ensures happiness for the largest possible number of Panamanians, which is our main duty anyway. We will fulfill our pledges with our characteristic sense of responsibility. Thank you. [applause, shouts]

Delvalle Rejects Asylum; Vows To Stay

PA260200 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0748 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpt] Panama City, 26 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—Eric Arturo Delvalle, the ousted president of Panama, today told ACAN-EFE that he has been offered asylum in several embassies. He noted, however, that he has decided not to leave but rather to remain in the country.

The former president, who was dismissed early this morning by the legislature, said that some hours ago, riot policemen known as the "Dobermans" were withdrawn from his home, and that, under the present circumstances, he is not afraid. [passage omitted]

Calls Dismissal "Comedy"

PA260746 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0726 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Panama, 26 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—Ousted Panamanian President Eric Arturo Delvalle told ACAN-EFE today that the extraordinary session the Legislative Assembly is holding is a "buffoon comedy." Delvalle said that he "did not act under foreign instructions" in firing General Noriega.

While the Assembly decided to dismiss him, Delvalle stated that he continues to govern and that within the next few hours he will dismiss the cabinet and ambassadors abroad.

In exclusive statements to ACAN-EFE, Delvalle predicted hard times for Panama, because it could become financially and diplomatically isolated by the democratic world.

To Petition Supreme Court

PA260859 Paris AFP in Spanish 0824 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Panama City, 26 Feb (AFP)—Eric Arturo Delvalle, who was president of Panama until yesterday, early this morning rejected the Legislative Assembly's decision to remove him for having "violated the Constitution." Today he said that he will file an appeal with the Supreme Court of Justice requesting that the Assembly's actions be declared illegal.

When asked if he would request the U.S. Southern Command, which is based in Panama, to intervene militarily, he replied that he "would never make such a request, because no Panamanian would."

Delvalle noted that he continues to be the president of this country and that it is "not within the Assembly's power to remove me in this manner." He made these statements to the Colombian Caracol radio network, which was monitored here, shortly after the Panamanian legislature's decision became known.

Thirty-eight of the 67 deputies who attended a special session today voted to fire the president, who on Thursday unsuccessfully attempted to remove General Manuel Noriega, head of the Defense Forces, from his post.

Delvalle asked the Latin American countries "not to recognize the government that is attempting to replace me, because it is the product of a farce."

"It is possible they will use weapons to prevent me from entering the Presidency, but I am certain that the law is on my side," he said.

"I am not leaving (the country or the presidency), but I am going to the Supreme Court to use the resources made available by the Constitution," he stated.

Delvalle remains at his residence, on Cincuentenario Avenue in this capital, accompanied by U.S. Ambassador Arthur Davis and the apostolic nuncio.

Finally, in his statement to Caracol, Delvalle said he has the support of the U.S. State Department, with which he has established communications and which has assured him that it recognizes the legitimacy of his government.

Rejects Asking U.S. for Help

PA261440 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 1241 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Panama City, 26 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—In an interview with ACAN-EFE, ousted Panamanian President Eric Arturo Delvalle said he is not in favor of asking the U.S. Southern Command to enter Panamanian territory "under any circumstance."

Delvalle noted that the Torrijos-Carter Treaties signed in 1977 by both countries deal with that alternative to safeguard the installations, but despite this he said he "does not ever want to use that possibility."

Early this morning the former president was in his residence following the legislature's decisions on television. He does not have a military guard, but a group of personal friends are with him.

The legislature today approved the removal of President Delvalle and Vice President Roderick Esquivel who, according to the government legislators, violated the Constitution.

The ousted Panamanian president today told ACAN-EFE that "there was a farce" in the legislature after he ordered General Manuel Antonio Noriega's removal as commander of the Defense Forces.

The resolution approved by 38 legislators—all of the government alliance—out of a total of 67 legislators stated that Delvalle violated constitutional order by violating the law on military succession.

"At no time has the president violated the Constitution and the constitutional norms of the Republic. On the contrary, based on the Constitution and the laws that govern the Defense Forces, I made the decision to remove Gen Noriega from his position," Delvalle said.

"There has been a farce in the Assembly," he added, "where, for totally far-fetched reasons, it has been insinuated that I have acted on the basis of foreign proposals. I clearly explained the various reasons that led me to remove Gen Noriega from his post."

He stressed that "it would be difficult for someone in this country to doubt that the nation's fiscal and economic unrest is due to the Panamanian people's feeling that the Defense Forces should return to their professional positions and not meddle in national politics."

"Everything that has happened is nothing but a scheme to satisfy that desire of continuing to believe that because they (the military) have the weapons, they can appoint some minister in the Presidency and their friends as ministers," the former Panamanian president said.

What the Defense Forces are doing, he said, "is destroying the country and the banking and financial center. They are destroying the economy, and I was not going to let this continue. That is what led me to decide to remove him (Noriega) and appoint Justines to replace him."

Asked about Panama's immediate future after his ouster, Delvalle forecast "very bad days" for the country.

"Panama," he said, "is going to be isolated by most of the countries of Latin America and the world that consider themselves democratic."

Delvalle said that beginning tomorrow, he plans to "dismiss all the ministers, appoint new ministers, and dismiss ambassadors. I am sure most of the democratic countries of America will accept my appointments and will not accept the changes of another president or another government other than my own."

Regarding the tense calm in this capital after his decision to remove Gen Noriega, the former president said it was because the news took many people by surprise and because "there is no doubt that there is a large number of frightened people in this country."

"Here," he added, "we live under a regime of terror. People are arrested without any explanation. Today, an opposition politician, whom I politically oppose, was turned back from the airport even though he is a Panamanian and without any legal or moral reason for his detention."

In short, he stressed, "there is much fear, but that fear will disappear even though the opposition Civic Crusade has been extremely patient because it has done everything through peaceful methods. They [not further identified] will end up at some moment pushing this country to an uprising."

In the interview Delvalle expressed his fear that "if we continue this regime of pressure we will soon have guerrillas in the cities and in the countryside."

Regarding his safety and that of his family, he said he is not afraid and that "I was offered asylum in various embassies, but my wife (Mariela Diaz) and I spoke with our children and we decided to stay here. There is no reason why we should run or hide."

U.S. Envoy at Delvalle Home

PA261528 Panama City CRITICA in Spanish 26 Feb 88 p 1

[Unattributed article: "Davis Slept in Delvalle's House"]

[Text] As we were going to press, Eric Arturo Delvalle was in his residence, accompanied by a few friends and fellow members of the Republican Party.

U.S. Ambassador Arthur Davis was also at his home.

The reports add that no policemen or military men have been observed at the Delvalle's residence

Noriega Discusses Removal, Delvalle

PA261104 Paris AFP in Spanish 1034 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Panama's strongman General Manuel Antonio Noriega today stated that the decision of former President Eric Delvalle to dismiss him as head of the Armed Forces was due to "confusion, pressure, and many things that happened in his mind."

In his first public reaction following Delvalle's announcement that ended with Delvalle's own ouster as president, Noriega noted the support extended to him by the Armed Forces General Staff. He did this in statements he made to AFP during his visit early this morning to the Palace of the Herons to congratulate Manuel Solis Palma, the new Panamanian president.

In his opinion, the support given by the military men stems from the fact that "military doctrine is not support for one man; it is the conviction that one does not belong to a tribe, but to an institution of discipline, training, and broad horizons [proyecciones]."

Noriega noted that Panama's nationalistic course "does not need to be strengthened, because it is an essence that comes from the roots of the Panamanian state, which becomes gigantic in the face of foreign attacks and threats."

When asked about possible sanctions against Panama by the United States, Noriega replied only that in the United States, "there are intelligent, stupid, and malevolent men." He said the Panamanian political process is identified by "a search for its own identity and development," and he issued a call to "avoid social and race wars."

The controversial officer reaffirmed the slogan of the Armed Forces: "Not a step backward," indicating that this means no return to the colonialist past and no surrender.

Finally, Noriega sent a message to Panamanians to take advantage of the new political situation prevailing in Panama, "so we can all emerge in good shape." However, he declined to send a message abroad because "it is controlled by the dollars and the millions spent by the United States."

Reiterates 'Principles'

PA261238 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1200 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Interview with General Manuel Antonio Noriega, FDP commander in chief, on 26 February, by John Jairo Posada at the Presidential Palace in Panama City—recorded]

[Text] [Noriega] Not one step backward [Defense Forces slogan] is not lyrical poetry. It is an expression of a doctrine and it means, we do not want to return to the past, we do not want to give up our dignity. That expression means we will not abandon our principles. It is a no to alignment, to colonialism, to racial differences, and everything that denies human life.

[Posada] What is your message for the Panamanian and Latin American people today?

[Noriega] This is a message for Panama, because the area outside Panama is controlled by dollars or by the millions of dollars they [not further identified] are spending. That is their problem. However, for the Panamanian people, who have a president, [as heard] a nationalistic history, a great administrative capacity, and great maturity and experience... [changes thought] I want to tell the Panamanian people that we must take advantage of those capacities so everything will turn out right for everybody. Thank you very much.

Views U.S. 'Campaign'

PA261300 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1205 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Telephone interview with General Manuel Antonio Noriega by Pedro Piqueda of Spain's Radio Nacional; date, place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Piqueda] General Noriega, good morning, this is Pedro Piqueda of Radio Nacional of Spain. There is a difficult situation in Panama at this time. In your opinion, what is the situation?

[Noriega] Well, the situation in Panama is due to the continuous deterioration [as heard] of the U.S. interference because it wants to maintain neocolonialism in our territory after the Torrijos-Carter Treaties-set date of 1999. The Panamanian position of not being aligned to the ideological poles of power, the Panamanian position of maintaining peace in Central America, which is the regional setting of Central America and Panama, the moral support for Nicaragua on the basis of Esquipulas II and President Oscar Arias' efforts so peace will be strictly Central American and not in the image and likeness of any ideological pole of power. [sentence as heard]

When we maintain those positions we are seen as a bad example by those who still believe that banana republics exist in this century. That is the doctrine of the deterioration of the U.S. relations with Panama.

[Piqueda] Gen Noriega, you are talking about U.S. interference in the general affairs of all Central America. In this specific case, in the events a few hours ago involving president, now former president, Eric Delvalle, what is the U.S. involvement?

[Noriega] [It is] total, it has been maintaining a web, it has been weaving a web that includes psychological warfare and, as part of that psychological warfare, all the stages, which include slanders, lies, insults, and conspiracy. That web also includes disinformation, the use of the international communications media to distort and make controversial the image of a small country of 2 million people that does not have any offensive military force, that does not have any Marxist-Leninist ideological country [as heard], but which does have the envied geographic position of being the waist of the world, which is one of the resources for geopolitical control.

[Piqueda] Gen Noriega, you are talking about a campaign. I suppose you are referring to the accusations presented against you in the United States. Those accusations linked you with drug trafficking activities. I suppose you are talking about that, right?

[Noriega] Well, it is a campaign against Panama. You must recall that within the campaign I am the commander of the Panama Defense Forces [FDP], but there are hundreds of other names, activities, and several institutions involved in it. They are trying to discredit all those names and institutions, because these are the basic points of equilibrium. They want to destroy the balance, because the balance does not want to align with neocolonialism.

[Piqueda] Gen Noriega, do you think a U.S. military intervention in Panama is possible? What would you do to stop it?

[Noriega] A U.S. intervention in Panama...well, the United States has carried out 21 interventions in Panama from 1903 until 1964, when 21 [corrects himself] 23 Panamanians and 7 U.S. citizens died. The United States forces clashed with Panamanian students and an unarmed people.

The United States could do that again, but they will confront a worthy people. We will not be on our knees. We will show our arrogance. Unlike you, we do not have great technical capacity, but we did inherit your dignity and bravery.

[Piqueda] In other words, you bear in mind the possibility of an intervention. Gen Noriega, do you know where former Panamanian President Eric Delvalle is?

[Noriega] He is at his home with his family without problems.

[Piqueda] We heard former President Delvalle met with the U.S. ambassador to Panama? Can this extreme event be confirmed?

[Noriega] The U.S. ambassador met with him for about 6 hours. In this country everyone has the right to meet with his friends, advisers, builders [constructores], and his comforters.

[Piqueda] Mr Delvalle insists in saying now that his removal is unconstitutional.

[Noriega] Well, that is a different issue. That is another aspect of the question. That is within the purview of our parliament, which in Panama is called the National Legislative Assembly. This assembly is elected by the people and unlike many nations in the world, it represents the minority groups including Blacks and Indians. Therefore, our assembly is the true expression of the people's vote. Mr Delvalle should address that branch, because the civilian, peoples' power is the one that judged him.

[Piqueda] Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega, strongman of Panama and FDP commander, thank you for being with Radio Nacional de Espana during these difficult times your country is experiencing. Thank you very much and good morning.

[Noriega] Can I correct you in something you said?

[Piqueda] Yes.

[Noriega] My dear fellow, I am not a strongman. I weigh 140lbs.

[Piqueda] Gen Noriega, you know the expression though...

[Noriega interrupts] I am interested in our dignity, the dignity the Spaniards brought to America to be mixed with our Indians' dignity, as I said before.

[Piqueda] Gen Noriega, thank you very much for being with us. Good morning.

[Noriega] O.K.

Reaction of Noriega, Supporters to Ouster

Noriega Not Planning Statement

PA260524 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0413 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpt] Panama City, 25 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—Panamanian military chief Manuel Antonio Noriega will for the time being make no statement on President Eric Arturo Delvalle's decision to dismiss him, military sources reported.

A spokesman for the Panamanian Defense Forces, who asked to remain anonymous, said tonight that General Noriega will for the time being not hold a news conference and that the media will be notified when he does. [passage omitted]

Justines Refuses To Assume Post

PA260220 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0058 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Statements by Colonel Marcos Justines, chief of the Panama Defense Forces, FDP, General Staff, "a few minutes ago"; place not given—recorded]

[Text] Good evening, gentlemen: As chief of the General Staff, I want to inform the people that minutes before he broadcasted his statement to the country, the president of the Republic called me and informed me he was comtemplating and was going to dismiss General Noriega. He did not tell me he was on the verge of doing so, but that he was on the verge of deciding.

He informed me that I would assume the post of commander in chief immediately, and he is a witness to—he is aware of—the fact that I rejected this offer. We have been speaking with him constantly, and he knows our position is that there is too much U.S. interference in this Panamanian matter. He knows this. Furthermore, during his trips to Florida, he has been trying to arrange meetings—because we understand that he has not been called to any meeting at any time, and that he has practically sought to hold these meetings with third-, fourth-, fifth-echelon representatives of the State Department. Actually, in his capacity as president of a nation, he has at no time been offered a meeting with President Reagan or, failing this, with Secretary of State Shultz. He has always dealt with lower-echelon people, which has led him to feel depressed and worried, and he has practically been forced to make this decision.

We repeat: We are not denying or refusing this post, which is irrelevant to us because we have a commander, Commander Noriega. [sentence as heard] We did not do so under any pressure, because we told him this right after he [Delvalle] told us we had been selected to maintain order.

I want to inform the country that we are calling for understanding, for calm, for tranquillity, and for order. I am certain, and I dare speak for my colleagues on the General Staff, that no one here will lend himself to this game. Yesterday, today, or tomorrow the decision about the departure of a commander has to be a decision made by Panamanians, unlike the current decision, which, although made by a Panamanian, was made by him under U.S. pressure. We think they [the United States] are making a serious mistake, and they must allow Panamanians to make the most appropriate decision.

To compare this with a boxing match, they have been in the ring for a long time. They are not acting as judges or referees; they are in the ring.... [broadcast ends with 50-second break in reception]

[Paris AFP in Spanish at 0108 GMT on 26 February reports the following: "Colonel Marcos Justines, chief of the FDP General Staff, tonight rejected his appointment, as announced by President Eric Delvalle, as commander in chief to replace General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

"In statements to the press, Justines charged that the United States has forced Delvalle 'to make a mistake.' He also reasserted his loyalty to Noriega, who, he said, 'is and will continue to be' the FDP commander in chief."]

Colonels: Delvalle To Go 'First'

PA260010 Panama City Circuito RPC Television in Spanish 2321 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] A few minutes ago, Colonels Leonidas Macias and Elias Castillo gave statements to local and international reporters in the courtyard of the central headquarters. The film report you will see and the journalistic work are unedited; therefore, we ask you for your patience. Here are Col Macias' statements, which will be followed by those of Col Castillo.

[Begin recording] [Macias] The message is that neither Justines nor any one of us will take charge of the command. He [President Eric Delvalle] will go first. That is all.

[Reporter] Colonel, could you repeat that again, please?

[Macias] None of us desires the command. The commander remains, and so will we all. The president goes.

[Castillo] The entire General Staff, the mid-level command, officers, non-commissioned officers, and men support our General Manuel Antonio Noriega. He is the only commander of the Defense Forces.

[Reporter] Is Col Justines here? [end recording] [abrupt ending as monitored]

Paper Closed; TV 5 Off Air

PA260234 Panama City ACAN in Spanish 0200 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Panama City, 25 Feb (ACAN-EFE)—Panamanian Army troops today simultaneously closed the opposition newspaper LA PRENSA and the television station owned by President Eric Arturo Delvalle.

Television station "Channel 5" stopped broadcasting shortly after its 1900 (0000 GMT) newscast, and after viewers saw military troops in combat gear enter the station's installations.

Right now, no one is answering the station's telephones.

Meanwhile, Army troops closed the opposition newspaper LA PRENSA "without an order" to do so, according to what the newspaper's administrative director, Francisco Arias, told ACAN-EFE.

The director of LA PRENSA stated that "this is another of the Defense Forces' arbitrary actions." He added "this is a de facto and not a de jure action."

Army troops occupied the opposition newspaper's installations after Panamanian President Eric Arturo Delvalle announced the dismissal of General Manuel Antonio Noriega from his position as commander of the Defense Forces.

Delvalle named Colonel Marcos Justines, chief of the Defense Forces General Staff, as Noriega's successor. Justines, however, publicly refused the appointment and said that "no one on the General Staff will accept this game."

Police Head Macias Gives Support

WA260014 Paris AFP in English 2355 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Panama City, Feb 25 (AFP)—Panamanian Police Chief Colonel Leonidas Macias refused to accept the sacking Thursday of Defense Forces Commander General Manuel Antonio Noriega by President Eric Delvalle.

He said "the one who should go is President Delvalle."

Col. Macias, who is a member of the Defense Forces General Staff, said neither Col. Marcos Justines — named by Mr. Delvalle to succeed Gen. Noriega—nor any any other military leader would take command of the Defense Forces.

Military Said Planning 'Act'

PA260015 Paris AFP in Spanish 0008 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpt] Panama City, 25 Feb (AFP)—The FDP, which are gathered in a meeting with General Manuel Antonio Noriega, are reportedly planning an act "of force" against President Eric Delvalle, whose whereabouts are unknown, according to rumors circulating in this capital. [passage omitted]

FDP, UNADE Back Noriega

PA260018 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 2335 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Attention, listeners throughout the country. Attention, listeners of Radio Nacional of Panama. We are in a position to inform you that the entire FDP General Staff has closed ranks as a single fist around General Manuel Antonio Noriega, FDP commander in chief, in the face of the recent statements made to the country over a television network by Mr Eric Arturo Delvalle. We repeat, the entire leadership, the entire FDP General Staff, is closing ranks around FDP Commander in Chief Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega, whom they recognize as the only commander of the country's armed institution.

We are in a position to report that the Democratic Revolutionary Party [PRD] and the other parties of the National Democratic Union [UNADE] are summoning their members to their respective headquarters. In Panama City, PRD members should go to the Ascanio Villalaz headquarters to support Gen Noriega under the slogan: Not a single step backward!

We will continue informing you.

Politicians, Officers Meet

PA260101 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 0020 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpts] All members of the Defense Forces General Staff have expressed their support for General Manuel Antonio Noriega, commander in chief of the Panama Defense Forces. [passage omitted] Likewise, public officials from various levels have shown up at Defense Forces Headquarters to confirm their support for Gen Noriega.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Revolutionary Party, Liberal Party, Labor Party, and Panamenista Revolutionary Party have been calling their members for meetings in their respective headquarters to organize their support for the Defense Forces commander.

Reports from Chiriqui, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, and Cocle reveal that the people and UNADE activists are gathering at the main Defense Forces barracks. This has been reported to Radio Nacional by Majors Edilberto Delcid, Carlos Arjona, Jose Trujillo, and Miguel Aleman from the country's various military zones.

Troops Deployed in Capital

PA260257 Paris AFP in Spanish 0113 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Excerpts] Panama City, 25 Feb (AFP)—The FDP tonight reiterated their total support for General Manuel Antonio Noriega, who was dismissed from his post as commander in chief by President Eric Delvalle. All the country's military zones announced their support for Gen Noriega, according to military sources. [passage omitted]

Following Noriega's dismissal, antiriot forces immediately occupied 50th Street and other strategic points of the Panamanian capital that over the last 8 months have frequently been the sites of violent opposition protests. [passage omitted]

In the middle of the confusion, in government circles tonight rumor had it that President Delvalle may have "sought refuge" in a U.S. area of the former Canal Zone.

In various parts of the capital, supporters of the opposition National Civic Crusade initially took to the streets to bang pots and to wave white handkerchiefs. However, after the statements by top officers reiterating their support for Noriega, the demonstrators preferred to stay home.

Numerous government officials and labor union and political leaders who support the government publicly criticized Noriega's dismissal. They said that such a measure responds to the interests of the Panamanian "oligarchy." [passage omitted]

Ruling Coalition Offers Support

PA260637 Panama City Televisora Nacional in Spanish 0424 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Statement by PRD President Romulo Escobar Bethancourt at the Presidential Palace in Panama City—live]

[Text] I thank the distinguished comrades representing the parties that make up UNADE for granting me the honor of speaking not only on behalf of the Democratic Revolutionary Party but on behalf of the other UNADE member parties, which are present here.

At this extremely serious moment our parties wish to reiterate the fundamental concepts under which we have been acting throughout this entire period of destabilization of our country and of foreign aggression against our institutions and our nation's structure.

We assert once more tonight that the fundamental objective of the overall seditious campaign against our country is to place our homeland on its knees; to force it to revise the Torrijos-Carter Treaties; and to make it permit the U.S. military presence to continue on our territory beyond the year 2000 through a new agreement, in

open violation of the victories we achieved under General Omar Torrijos Herrera's leadership, which bind the U.S. forces through a definitive agreement to abandon our territory at noon on 31 December 1999.

This agreement, which was negotiated by the two countries, has become the fundamental banner of our homeland's hope for full sovereignty. We, the UNADE parties, are not only committed to this agreement but also to our homeland's history and to the future generations. For this reason, when we say not a single step back we express not only our feelings but the feelings of the generations that preceded us, of those who fell in this struggle for national sovereignty, and of the future generations, which will make today's Panamanians accountable for their behavior in response to the attacks against our sovereignty from abroad.

We also reassert that the objective behind removing General Manuel Antonio Noriega from the [post of] commander in chief is none other than to begin dismantling the structure of the FDP in order to break up their organization, to stamp out their nationalistic spirit, and to put an end to their historic commitment, which Gen Torrijos' revolutionary spirit infused into them and which identifies our FDP with the Panamanian people and our national sovereignty. The intention after achieving this goal is to turn the FDP into a force at the service of the Panamanian oligarchy and to make them obey the dictates of U.S. imperialism.

Our reassertion tonight is intended to point out that Gen Noriega's trial or indictment in the United States is a political farce; that it was prearranged; that slippery proceedings have been used in it, such as obtaining statements of convicts who are anxious to get their sentences reduced through this means as well as through statements by Panamanians who feel frustrated because they have been dismissed from their posts; and that the statements that were obtained to carry out this indictment are but the culmination of previous events. Suffice it to recall that, many months before, the U.S. Senate had issued a resolution demanding that the Republic of Panama remove Gen Noriega from his post.

Fortunately for our homeland, we have found in Gen Noriega a worthy successor to Gen Omar Torrijos Herrera. We have found in our Defense Forces a monolithic unity and deeply nationalistic spirit that culminated with the maximum expression given by its mid-level commanders when it demanded, not only in the name of the Defense Forces but in the name of all the Panamanian people, the departure of the illegal Southern Command that operates on our territory. Under these conditions, tonight we reaffirm the support of our parties for Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega, the attitude assumed by the General Staff of the Defense Forces, and the firm and upright position of all officers, noncommissioned officers, and troops of the Defense Forces.

We, the parties that make up UNADE, do not accept President Delvalle's decision because it is not a national decision. It is a decision that has been suggested and imposed by the United States under the threat of an economic embargo, under the threat to convene the OAS, and under the threat to continue the diatribe and slander not only against Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega but against our homeland's integrity and prestige. The decision of all of the parties that make up UNADE, and the decision of the Defense Forces and our country's patriotic forces, is that despite this strategy they will not bend the will of the entire Panamanian people and nation to achieve full independence and total sovereignty.

For this reason, we want to point out tonight that the UNADE member parties continue to hold the position that constitutional order must be maintained in our Republic; that the solution to our political problem must be a national solution without foreign intervention; that the solution must be achieved through the path of the democratic elections scheduled for May 1989 in accordance with our Constitution and laws; and that, along this path, our parties continue to stress that all measures will be carried out to guarantee the honesty and purity of those elections but that we do not accept any foreign imposition with regard to the decisions that will lead to the resolution of our national problems.

If not only Panama but the rest of the Latin American countries allow the United States—after it fails through other means—to carry out the masquerade of a trial against any Latin American military man or official or against any person who, holding a post or high-ranking position in any of our Latin American countries, does not give in or yield to pressures or threats, then Latin America will face a very dark future. It will be a future characterized by the fact that, instead of sending in troops or imposing an economic embargo, the United States will devote itself to hurling diatribe and slander at those high-ranking officials. And, if they do not accept the United States' designs, they will then be prosecuted in a court in the United States, which intends, through these means, to exercise jurisdiction beyond U.S. territory, as is happening now in the case of Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega.

In view of all of these circumstances, tonight we fully support the position announced here by Honorable Legislator Aleman Boyd.

San Miguelito Mayor on Backing

PA260123 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 2355 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Telephone interview with Mayor of San Miguelito Balbina de Perinan by station director Danilo Caballero in San Miguelito—live]

[Excerpt] [Passage omitted] [Balbina de Perinan] We have just heard the president's statements removing General Noriega from his post. We support the decision

of Gen Noriega's general staff and declare that he will find unlimited support in this trench of San Miguelito. We repudiate the disrespectful stance and behavior taken by the the president of the republic at this moment. He had been sabotaging the country's internal (?situation) for a long time.

At this time, we wish to tell the citizens that he displayed this behavior when he issued memorandum No 2588, in which he listed a number of measures that would affect the popular sectors. In this memorandum, the president concluded that the two installments of the 13th month [salary bonus] had to be eliminated. This was to benefit the Panamanian people. He also pointed out that the tax on staples was going to be increased in this country. With this memorandum, he was adhering to U.S. policy. Now, as Gen Noriega adopts a straightforward position with regard to the government and the very backward U.S. positions, the president adheres to the U.S. stands. It must be very clearly pointed out to the citizens, and we must keep this clearly in mind: Gen Noriega is not the problem. The problem is the behavior of the most backward sector of the U.S. Government against a nation called Panama. What Mr President has done is to play into their hands again. We know to which class the president belongs. That is why he refused to take a stand [pronunciarse]. This is true, and it has been said for a long time. It was said that the president was not on the side of the popular sectors. It was said that the president did not want to take a stand.

Today we are not surprised that his statement was made from the U.S. military bases [sus declaraciones hayan sido desde las bases militares noreamericanos]. We want to denounce this and to tell Manuel Antonio Noriega, commander of the FDP; his entire general staff; and the Panamanian people that we support them. At this time, we, the true Torrijists, the true Panamanians, are on the side of our people, including Commander Noriega. We support his straightforward statements against U.S. sectors that want to get their hands on Panama. We tell them that we are organizing in San Miguelito. We are going to take to the streets. We are going to be with our people, with the FDP, with the popular sectors, and with the Torrijist sectors. Not a single step backward, Commander.

Let the traitors go to Miami. As the general's general staff properly noted, he [Delvalle] is the one who is leaving. We are going to be here defending the popular sectors, gentlemen. Commander, not a single step backward. Don't budge. The commander is here to stay. We are affirming this to him in San Miguelito, which has been a trench of people's power. It has been a trench that the sedition has not entered. Gentlemen, be very careful: those who follow the siren's song....[leaves thought unfinished] And we tell the president that he is no longer president of the Republic, that he is no longer president of this country, and that he should go to Miami, like the traitors. Let him go and govern in Miami. True Panamanians are going to stay here in Panama. This is our statement.

At this moment, Panamanian women, the popular sectors, and the parties are joining together in San Miguelito because we are going to take to the streets. Gentlemen, we say here: not a single step backward. We are going to continue on because there is no room here for traitors. There is a single position here. Our stand in San Miguelito District is Torrijist. [passage omitted]

5th Zone Personnel Give Backing

PA261354 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1250 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Communique issued by the 5th Military Zone command on 25 February]

[Text] The major commanding the 5th Military Zone, the officers, and the rank and file of the 5th Military Zone stationed in Chiriqui Province hereby wish to express to the public our total and unyielding solidarity with and unrestricted support for General Manuel Antonio Noriega, commander in chief of the Panamanian Defense Forces of the Republic of Panama, and the General Staff at this moment of significant historic and political decisions for Panama.

It shall be clear, and we hereby wish to state, that our nationalistic and sovereign struggle, side by side with our people, will continue toward the highest destiny set by the fatherland.

Yours truly,

All for the Fatherland.

[Signed] Major Luis Alonso Del Cid Aguilar, chief of the 5th Military Zone; officers, rank and file

PRD Front: Delvalle 'Traitor'

PA261332 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1110 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Communique issued by the Public Servants Front of the PRD; date, place not given]

[Text] In view of the insolent and irresponsible attitude of Mr Eric Arturo Delvalle who, abusing legal presidential power, tried to eliminate General Manuel Antonio Noriega, the leader of the national liberation process, as leader of the Defense Forces, the PRD Public Servants Front repudiates the new traitor and it reaffirms its Torrijist militancy and the urgent need to intensify more than ever the strategic alliance with the Defense Forces and our solidarity with Gen Manuel Antonio Noriega, the main target of the traitors inside and outside the country.

This is occurring within the context of the current political crisis and is consistent with the seditious plan of the traitors inside and outside the country.

Mr Delvalle's legal position was based on a tactical alliance of the Torrijist process with other minority political forces whose lowest representative was Mr Delvalle. Despite the mediocrity of his Presidency, Mr Delvalle seemed to be a necessary evil in the context of the political crisis and that is why he was tolerated and even defended by our party. Now, when it is evident that he was and is a pawn of imperialism against the final recovery of the canal and the perfecting of our fatherland, we reaffirm our revolutionary right to power because we and not they [not further identified] have moral and political authority and because we express the people's will, the real source of all legitimate power. That is what is essential. The additional, although significant, aspect is the illegal and unconstitutional nature of the attempt by Delvalle who ignored the norms that regulate military promotions.

For the unity of the Torrijist forces against the neocolonial model; For the creation of the patriotic front; For people's power; Not one step backwards!

Signed: Benjamin Colamarco Patino, national secretary

PRD Issues Call to Workers

PA261316 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1100 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Communique issued by the Labor Union Front of the PRD, on 26 February; place not given]

[Text] In view of the events which took place yesterday, 25 February 1988, the Labor Union Front of the PRD announces to the national and international public opinion that Panamanian workers will fight to the end to preserve the gains we have achieved after so many sacrifices. Panamanian workers will not take a single step backward. We are the majority class in our country and any decision must be considered by wage earners in the cities and in the countryside.

The oligarchy has no right to continue betraying and selling out our country, a practice once again demonstrated by the traitorous attitude of Mr Delvalle, who has knelt down before the great northern giant by trying to remove General Manuel Antonio Noriega from his post.

We call on all Panamanian workers, who follow Torrijos' principles, to take to the streets to give support to General Manuel Antonio Noriega, commander of the peace and defender of Panama's sovereignty, because the current circumstances so demand.

Historically the streets have been ours. Let us show our strength today and let us not allow the oligarchy to take back our gains.

We call on all workers and their labor union leaders to take to the streets to defend Gen Noriega.

Abadia Anticipates No Foreign Policy Changes

PA261315 Panama City Domestic Service in Spanish 1233 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Interview with Foreign Minister Jorge Abadia Arias by unidentified reporter; date, place not given—recorded]

[Text] [Abadia Arias] I do not think President Solis Palma will change our foreign policy. We have every intention of maintaining relations with all the world's countries as long as these relations benefit Panama's interests. I do not think our foreign policy will change.

[Reporter] Will a diplomatic drive be launched following the speech by the minister in charge of the Presidency?

[Abadia Arias] Yes, there is no doubt about that. At this moment we have instructed our center of operations [not further identified] to disseminate the speech abroad so the world will know how President Solis Palma thinks and talks.

Arias Calderon Calls for Nation's Isolation

PA260847 Paris AFP in Spanish 0705 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] San Jose, 26 Feb (AFP)—Ricardo Arias Calderon, president of Panama's Christian Democratic Party [PDC], today called upon "Latin America's democratic countries to diplomatically isolate and not accept the de facto regime" that "is trying to become established" in Panama.

"I hope the Latin American countries, particularly the Group of Eight (Contadora and Support groups) currently meeting in Cartagena, Colombia, understand that the latest events in Panama unmask the regime of force, crime, and drug trafficking that rules us," the political leader said in statements to AFP.

Arias Calderon said Panamanian military authorities did not allow him to enter the country at the Omar Torrijos International Airport on 25 February, and he was forced to travel to Costa Rica, accompanied by his wife.

Arias Calderon was hopeful that on 26 February "Panamanians will spontaneously paralyze the country," repudiating the situation following President Eric Delvalle's decision to dismiss General Manuel Antonio Noriega as Defense Forces commander, which led the Legislative Assembly to dismiss Delvalle.

Arias Calderon "dismissed" the step taken by his country's legislators and said "deputy legislators" were used to decide on Delvalle's dismissal, backed by the 38 deputies present (out of a total of 67 deputies.)

On the contrary, Arias Calderon insisted on calling upon Latin American countries to speak out on Panama's current political situation. Arias Calderon said that if the domestic opposition has not taken to the streets at this time, it is for fear of repression.

Arias Calderon said the wife of PDC legislator Guillermo Cochez was detained for 3 and 1/2 hours following Delvalle's annoucement. He made no reference to possible U.S. action in the current unrest his country is going through.

Finally, he appeared satisfied that President Delvalle remained at his home accompanied by the papal nuncio. Arias Calderon praised the role the churchman has played in the political and economic crisis affecting Panama for the past 8 months, following accusations of corruption and drug trafficking against Noriega.

Denied Entry to Country

PA261507 San Jose Radio Reloj in Spanish 1200 GMT 26 Feb 88

[Text] Ricardo Arias Calderon, president of the opposition Christian Democratic Party, has said he expects all Latin American countries will reject the de facto situation in Panama. He made his remarks to ACAN-EFE from San Jose where he was forced to move because he was not allowed to enter Panama. Arias compared the current situation in Panama to the final days of the government of former Nicaraguan President Anastasio Somoza.

PPR Head on 'Gringo Interventionists'

PA261604 Panama City CRITICA in Spanish 26 Feb 88 p 4

[Text] In a statement for CRITICA, Luis Gaspar Suarez Sierra, president of the Revolutionary Panamenista Party [PPR], said: "Eric Delvalle's treason was clear a long time ago; I had warned General Noriega several months ago."

Suarez added: "Commander Noriega will firmly remain as commander of the Defense Forces (FDP), as that is the desire of his comrades in arms; in other words, of his General Staff, his officers, noncommissioned officers, and troops."

Suarez also said that "at the same time, the entire country, the people, demand that Noriega firmly remain as FDP commander."

"The Panamanian people unanimously support Gen Noriega's firm, clear, patriotic, and nationalistic position. He must stay in order to defend the Panamanian people's achievements, Suarez stated." [quotation marks as published]

Suarez demanded a prompt reorganization of the cabinet so the organized popular groups, the people who care for the homeland and defend the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, will be represented.

"It is urgent for the popular forces to take over the offensive immediately. The UNADE [National Democratic Union] parties, the Democratic Revolutionary Party, the Labor Party (PALA), and the PPR should join with more force and determination in order to achieve the people's goals.

"The only one who must go is Delvalle, because of his treacherous attitude," Suarez stressed. Suarez warned the U.S. Embassy and Government that they should keep their hands off Panama and leave the Panamanians to resolve their own problems without their intervention "because this time the blood of the gringo interventionists will flow." "The Panamanian people will win," he concluded.

Paredes Testifies on Delvalle Slander Suit

PA251925 [Editorial Report] Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish on 25 February publishes on page 2a the approximately 1,800-word text of the statement by retired General Ruben Dario Paredes during 23 February questioning by Agustin Sanjur Otero, Fifth Circuit Prosecutor's Office in Panama City, concerning the charges against him "for slander and libel against President Eric Arturo Delvalle."

Asked if he made the statements attributed to him by LA PRENSA on 26 and 27 January, Paredes said they were made by him, but adds "there is no slander in any of those statements."

When the prosecutor asks Paredes if he is aware of the 5 January 1988 law amending the Penal Code, which punishes those who "offend the dignity, honor, or respect of a person through printed or other media," Paredes replies he is aware of it, but adds that another article in the Penal Code states that criticism and opinions on official actions by public officials are not crimes against honor.

Asked if he admits to making the statement published in LA PRENSA on 27 January in which he told Delvalle "to act like a man and tell Noriega that the situation must be corrected," Paredes says he did, and he is proud of stating so, because "it was a call from a man to another man."

Referring to his statement on 26 January that the "Blandon plan was aborted when Noriega and his accomplice, Delvalle," were unable to obtain a pardon or the suspension of the investigations of Noriega, Paredes says he confirms his statement.

Asked what he meant when he stated to LA PRENSA on 26 January that Delvalle should "feel between his legs...and if they are still there, he should call all sectors along with the church to seek a great national agreement; and if they are not there...he should go to the Remon Race Track's Jockey Club," Paredes replies: "I meant and I reiterate that President Delvalle should fill himself with courage and call for a great national agreement, just as the Catholic Church is recommending, and that he fulfill his duty as president to resolve the current crisis."

In concluding, Paredes states that he "never sought to offend the president's dignity and instead sought to shake his very fiber as a citizen, husband, and father so he will act."

Reiterates Remarks on Delvalle

PA261536 Panama City LA ESTRELLA DE PANAMA in Spanish 26 Feb 88 pp A-1, A-10

[Text] General Ruben Dario Paredes, retired, yesterday appeared at the First District Prosecutor's office and confirmed the statements he made during the "La Palabra" newscast on Radio K.W. Continente.

Paredes was accompanied by his defendant attorneys [Christian Democratic Party Legislator] Guillermo Cochez and Rogelio Cruz. Paredes reiterated that he had said: "The people who are there should retire, Mr Delvalle's time is over, we gave him all sorts of opportunities, and we must kick them out through the elections..."

"That was my statement," Paredes responded, "and I maintain Mr Delvalle could have resolved the crisis. However he has not had the determination to do it. I firmly believe in a transition to democracy. I have been advocating this and have been working on this since the Constitution was amended some 5 years ago. Today I am more convinced about this, and if Delvalle has not done it, people will do it in 1989. [no end quotation mark as published]

This is how Paredes responded to the charges in the suit filed against him for slandering and libeling President Delvalle. The prosecutor's office is investigating.

Columnist Criticizes President Delvalle

PA251627 Panama City MATUTINO in Spanish 25 Feb 88 p 8

["The Melting Pot" column by Luis Castilla Bravo]

[Excerpt] President Delvalle may have all the friends and fellow party members he wants, but he cannot afford the luxury, given his high post, of letting those who flatter him also plot his ouster and still claim they are his friends.

Perhaps the latter are not to blame, given the unwitting mistakes of the former. One cannot be a prisoner, judge, and defender-negotiator at the same time. Recent U.S. media reports, including well-known statements, place all of us who still defend the Panamanian democratic process in a difficult situation.

Also, if we consider the current inactivity, the astonishing administrative quietude as if nothing evil was being plotted in our midst, and the horrifying tranquility of one who feels safe from any evil winds, the final results cause panic. I believe all honest Torrijists should prepare themselves for the worst, because the final results imply the annihilation of Torrijism. [passage omitted]

Opposition Blames 'Corruption' for Crisis

PA261347 Panama City LA PRENSA in Spanish 25 Feb 88 p 26-a

["Text" of communique issued by the Permanent Civic Council, Consejo Permanente Civilista, signed by all opposition parties on 24 February]

[Text] The government's current financial problems are a logical result of the regime's need to annually increase, in an excessive manner, its expenditures to support a system based on corruption and administrative disorder and its need to pay for political support because it lacks popular legitimacy. The regime's public expenditures do not respond to the needs of the people but to the senseless and insatiable demands of a corrupt group that wants to remain in power at any cost.

The regime is considering taking drastic actions including the massive dismissal of government employees, the creation of new taxes, and the collection of other revenue to support its administrative apparatus because it lacks sufficient monetary resources to cover its great expenses.

A deep-rooted practice of the government has been to punish the people with new taxes every time it is in a crisis. One must recall the 5-percent sales tax, the increase of the workers-employers contributions, the excessive increase of gasoline prices, and the creation and increase of the educational tax, among others. However, we see that health, educational, and housing problems, for example, are far from being resolved; they are getting worse.

Today that same regime intends to impose measures that will increase unemployment in important areas, such as health and education; it intends to mortgage reverted areas after struggling 80 years to regain them; and it goes to the same foreign banks it criticizes to ask for more loans, while at the same time it tries to maintain a demagogic nationalistic facade.

Obviously, cooperation in this new stage of our public debt cannot be justified by those who are familiar with the government's financial situation.

Therefore, the Permanent Civic Council reiterates that the resolution of the crisis requires, first, a rapid and fundamental change, including the dismissal of General Noriega, achieving an independent judiciary, and forming an authentic democratic civil government supported by the majority of the Panamanian people. Only with this change can the crisis be resolved in both its social and political aspects.

Alberto Boyd, National Civic Crusade

Cecilia Alegre, Christian Democratic Party

Guillermo Endara, Authentic Panamenist Party

Luis Guillermo Casco Arias, MOLIRENA [Nationalist Liberal Republican Movement]

Julio Linares, PLA [Authentic Liberal Party]

Doris R. de Mata, People's Action Party

Argentina

Jaunarena on UK Maneuvers, Military Budget

PY260143 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 2028 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Puerto Deseado, 25 Feb (NA) —Defense Minister Horacio Jaunarena today confirmed that the Armed Forces' budget for this year "is slightly larger" than the 1987 budget, and he reiterated that his ministry has "implemented a salary reorganization plan" for military personnel.

Changing the subject, Jaunarena interpreted the announced British military presence in the South Atlantic as an attempt by the United Kingdom to "hinder the negotiating process" regarding sovereignty over the Malvinas Islands.

The minister also said the Army is currently experiencing a "gradual normalization" process, noting that "discipline has been restored within that force."

Jaunarena today inaugurated a new naval base in this city. On the occasion the Santa Cruz provincial government named him "official guest" through a decree signed by Governor Ricardo Del Val.

Upon his arrival in this city, Minister Jaunarena said this inauguration reveals "the Argentine people's will to reassert national sovereignty and integration of the territory."

Regarding the British decision to carry out a series of military maneuvers in the South Atlantic, he said: "It aggravates the situation in a conflictive area."

Commenting on the Argentine Government's position regarding Great Britain in view of the maneuvers, Jaunarena said: The "corresponding protests" are being lodged in all forums to "denounce an attitude that only hinders the negotiation of the dispute."

In this regard he confirmed that negotiations should include the subject of sovereignty demanded by the Argentine Foreign Ministry. Regarding the possibility that Great Britain might attempt an incursion into continental territory, the minister said: "One never knows what Great Britain is thinking."

Jaunarena added: "We certainly believe that the mere carrying out of military maneuvers on the Malvinas Islands increases tension, and we hope they have no plans of that sort."

The minister said: "I believe it is a way of introducing tension in the zone in a completely unjustified manner, and one should ask the British" whether that pressure is designed to make Argentina formally declare a ceasefire.

Anyhow, I believe it is a way to "hinder the negotiating process that must take place in order to resolve the problem in the south."

He went to say that Argentina is promoting that negotiating process, but so far "we have not received any British response."

Jaunarena also referred to the situation within the Army and said that it is experiencing a "gradual normalization, and that discipline, which is a basic principle of armed organizations, has been restored."

He believes this process is developing in a "satisfactory" manner, and he added that only "two" officers have decided to go underground, thus violating the military regulations, and I, in my capacity as defense minister, deeply regret this." [quotation mark as received]

Regarding the two officers' decision to go underground to "fight Marxism," Jaunarena said it was a "completely unjustified" attitude.

Referring to the military budget, he asserted that it is "slightly larger than last year's," and he said: "I believe with the normal flow of budgeted funds and the rationalization process being carried out by the forces, we will have a greater operational capacity."

The minister noted that "a salary reorganization plan has been implemented."

When he was asked whether the Chilean Navy might take advantage of the British Navy's presence, he answered: "We have not detected anything that would prompt speculation of this nature."

Asked whether there are plans to reactivate the Argentine military industry, he said: "We are always concerned about this subject," which is linked directly to exports.

Naval Operations Commander Raps UK Maneuvers

PY252101 Buenos Aires NOTICIAS ARGENTINAS in Spanish 1920 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Puerto Deseado, 25 Feb (NA)—Vice Admiral Nestor Baricco, commander of naval operations, today warned here that Argentine sovereignty "will be threatened by an unprecedent military deployment" of British troops on the Malvinas Islands, "which will undoubtedly disturb the South Atlantic's geostrategic conditions."

Barico gave a speech during the dedication ceremony of the new naval base at Puerto Deseado at noon today. The ceremony was presided over by Defense Minister Horacio Jaunarena.

Santa Cruz Governor Jaime del Val and Vice Admiral Ramon Arosa, Navy chief of staff, attended the ceremony, among others.

Upon being sworn in as commander of the naval base, Captain Roberto Leva gave an impassioned speech to the personnel and called for a pledge of "subordination and courage," to which the troops answered: "To serve the fatherland and defend our Constitution."

Barico noted that the dedication of the new naval station "is important because it contributes to the strengthening of the national defense in a place near the center of our operations, just a few days before our sovereignty will be threatened with a military deployment without precedent by those who usurp our insular territory and, undoubtedly, disturb the South Atlantic's geostrategic conditions."

Barico then said: "Our presence here reasserts the importance of this naval base, which is a fact and not mere rhetoric. For the Navy and the institutions that each of you represents, this base symbolizes the past, present, and future aspirations of a society, of a people engaged in the development of a sovereign nation."

"We are here representing the social, political, economic, and military factors of a country united around a firm determination inherited from our pioneers, who led the way and whose ideals we pledged to fulfill," said Barico.

He went on to state that he is sure that "this landmark will lead the country toward the definite integration of our beloved south."

Later, Barico unveiled a plaque which marked the official inauguration of the new naval base, and the new base commander, Capt Roberto Leva, assumed his post.

Minister Jaunarena arrived at noon. Earlier he had visited the 9th Tank Regiment in Puerto Deseado, where he greeted the troops.

After the ceremony, which included the presence of the missile-carrying frigates "Granville" and "Guerrico" anchored in Uruguay Bay, Jaunarena returned to Buenos Aires.

Memorandum to IMF Outlines Economic Policy

PY250220 Buenos Aires TELAM in Spanish 2345 GMT 24 Feb 88

[Text] Buenos Aires, 24 Feb (TELAM)—The government has set limits on the fiscal deficit for the first quarter of 1988, a year when it will be cut back from 7.1 percent of the GDP to 2.1 percent, mainly by the application of new tax measures, according to the memorandum on economic policy submitted to the IMF today by the Economy Ministry.

The 21-page memorandum confirms salary negotiations through labor-management arbitration boards, but notes that the government will intervene to keep sectoral agreements from adversely affecting consumer interests. It says prices will continue to be regulated, but price controls will be lifted, especially in competitive markets.

It points out that monetary policy will be consistent with the objective of reducing inflation and strengthening the balance of payments. In this regard, the increase in the money supply, which was 7 percent in February, will be slowed down to 4 percent monthly in the last quarter of 1988.

It announces that bank discount operations—the main source of monetary expansion—will henceforth be reduced.

Regarding foreign exchange policy, the memorandum confirms that the effective real exchange rate will be maintained so as to ensure an appropriate level of competitiveness (for Argentine goods abroad) and to meet balance-of-payments objectives.

After recalling that $700 million remains to be disbursed by creditor banks, the memorandum says that substantial additional financing will be required this year in order to cover the balance-of-payments deficit, estimated at $2.5 million. Consequently, it announces that negotiations will be promptly initiated to raise these funds from official and private creditors.

Great importance is attached to any assistance the IMF can provide in this effort to obtain additional financing, the memorandum states, adding that negotiations will also take place with the Paris Club to reschedule service payments on the medium- and long-term debt.

The foreign debt, which stood at $54.3 billion at the end of 1987, will increase by $700 million during the current quarter, according to the memorandum.

The memorandum, the main outlines of which were cleared last week with the IMF director, Michel Camdessus, was submitted to the IMF Board of Directors, whose approval is necessary for the release of the first installment of the $230-million stand-by loan and the $170-million export shortfall credit. This sum will be advanced this week by the U.S. Treasury.

In the initial part of the memorandum, the program announced on 14 October 1977 is outlined. This program included a system of mandatory savings, adjustment of public utility rates, currency devaluation, the creation of a foreign exchange free market, financial reforms, and price and salary freezes.

It points out that delayed approval of fiscal measures allowed the overall deficit of the public sector to grow to 7.1 percent of the GDP in 1987, a percentage that should now be reduced to 2.7 [figure as received]. To this end, a deficit limit of 6 billion australes was set for March and 5.6 billion for June. This will be possible through the new tax policy.

Regarding public enterprises, the memorandum says that since the beginning of February the treasury has let Government Petroleum Deposits and other enterprises avail themselves of all taxes on the sale of oil products, a decision that will allow domestic prices of crude oil to fall in line with world prices and will have important effects in the oil sector.

The treasury, the memorandum states, will take over payment of interest on the foreign debt of these enterprises. It then notes that under the budget, these enterprises will operate with the allotted funds; that is, they will not receive assistance from the treasury.

It indicates that efforts will be made toward keeping public utility rates at the December 1987 levels in real terms.

The memorandum stresses the government's decision to redefine the role of the public sector and to open some activities to the private sector. In this regard, it recalls the transfer of the austral to the private sector [as received], the oil program, and the sale of 40 percent of Aerolineas Argentinas shares. It announces the sale of the state equity in some petrochemical enterprises.

Finally, the memorandum reaffirms that the government will continue to eliminate quantitative restrictions on imports in order to stimulate Argentine industry and to further the integration of the Argentine economy in the world economy.

Bolivia

Paz Reportedly Unwilling To Extend Term

PY251326 La Paz La Red Panamericana in Spanish 1130 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Through Information Minister Herman Antelo, President Paz Estenssoro has said he does not want to extend his constitutional term. Minister Antelo stressed that the president is not interested in extending his term because he respects the Constitution and the law.

In the face of some proposals by members of Paz' MIR [Nationalist Revolutionary Movement] to extend his presidential term through a congressional decision, the president said he will not agree to such proposals.

Several political parties stressed that if the presidential term is extended, several problems will arise and democracy will be jeopardized.

Brazil

Government To Announce New Economic Measures

PY251135 Rio de Janeiro O GLOBO in Portuguese 24 Feb 88 p 21

[Text] Brasilia—The government will announce a new package of measures to fight the public deficit in the next 15 days. The package will include measures reducing public employee's salaries, limiting lending by official institutions, establishing a partial freeze on public service tariffs, implementing cuts in new official programs, and sterner supervision of tax cheating by the Internal Revenue Office.

The measures anticipate an agreement with the IMF and will face two of the most dramatic current problems of the government: the excessive public administration payroll, and the excessive liquidity in the economy—the latter being caused by what is effectively a negative interest rate that makes it difficult to place public bonds to finance the deficit.

The policy changes should not affect private or public workers. The government will merely abolish the monthly salary adjustments by the URP [Price Reference Unit], which is applied on federal workers' salaries.

The new package has been put together by the Finance and Planning Ministries and the Central Bank. President Sarney has yet to approve it even though there is agreement on most items and some parts have already taken official form. It would be better for the government to apply unpopular economic measures after the agreement with creditor banks. There is fear of a strong negative reaction to changes in the salary policy, the most controversial part of the new package.

The finance and planning ministers are very concerned about the state of complete disorganization of the economy, which has resulted from three heterodox shocks in little over a year.

Chile

Labor Association Threatens General Strike

PY252201 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Report by Angel Bozan Ramos from the General Cemetery]

[Text] During a ceremony today commemorating the 6th anniversary of the murder of labor leader Tucapel Jimenez, Hernol Flores, president of the National Association of Government Employees, ANEF, said that if the leaders of the National Workers Command [CNT] are sent to prison, workers should call for a general strike. Flores mentioned the strike because Manuel Bustos and Moises Labrana had to leave the ceremony to attend a court of appeals hearing on Judge (Dreise's) decision. Flores also stressed the current unity among opposition political parties and labor organizations in support of the no vote in the forthcoming plebiscite.

[Begin Flores recording] I want the country to know we are all together now. We have erased almost all the differences that separated political parties and labor organizations. We are not going to stand by idly if our fellow labor leaders are sent to jail. [applause] If the

Supreme Court [words indistinct] justice and sends Manuel Bustos and his fellow workers to jail, we should call a national strike so we all can go to jail with them, without any doubt. [applause]

This is not a threat, it is not an attempt to pressure the Supreme Court. We only want to appeal to the conscience of the judges hearing the case. Maybe they can recall that today is 25 February, and that 6 years ago a good man was murdered for the mere crime of being poor and a labor leader. If they, as judges, have been unable to create justice, to find those guilty of his murder. [sentence as heard] [end recording]

Nearly 300 labor leaders, politicians, and workers attended the ceremony at the General Cemetery this morning. Leaders of the Workers Democratic Central; the CNT; the ANEF; Clotario Blest, founder of the ANEF; Patricio Aylwin, president of the Christian Democratic Party; Ricardo Nunez, Socialist Party secretary general; and other political leaders attended the ceremony.

PDC Leader Demands State of Emergency Lifting

PY252251 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Excerpt] Christian Democratic Party [PDC] President Patricio Aylwin has said the government must lift the state of emergency and the state of disturbance of internal peace if the plebiscite is to be valid. Aylwin added that Interior Minister Sergio Fernandez does not have the moral authority to accuse others of violence. Let us recall that Fernandez said that violence will increase in March and April.

[Begin Aylwin recording] I think that in the last 14 years in Chile violence has been as much the expression of the government's attitude as the reaction to it. A climate of reconciliation contrary to violence requires that the government respect all citizens, no matter what their ideas. The regime is creating the proper climate for violence when it imposes a logic of war and divides the country into friends and enemies. Minister Fernandez' accusations, I believe, are only suppositions. Nothing has happened to make us believe violence will increase. Besides, I do not think Minister Fernandez has the moral authority to accuse others of violence. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Government Drops Charges Against Journalist

PY252212 Santiago Radio Chilena Network in Spanish 1600 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Excerpt] Punta Arenas—The regional government has announced it is withdrawing charges against Manuel Suarez, PRENSA AUSTRAL correspondent in Puerto Natales. The charges were filed on 12 February of last year for alleged violations of the State Security Law with the publication of an article entitled: The Political Sauce [La Chuchoca Politica].

The government issued a long communique saying that despite the violation of the law, in response to petitions from a group of citizens from Ultima Esperanza Province who reject Suarez' expressions and request benevolence toward their old neighbor who has been going through difficult times; considering Suarez' statements to the media that he never intended to incite the population to commit illegal acts; and to show the government's conciliatory attitude, its authorities have decided to withdraw all charges against Manuel Suarez Arce. [passage omitted]

Colombia

UP Protests Postponement of Referendum

PA260043 Bogota EL TIEMPO in Spanish 21 Feb 88 p 8a

[Report on communique issued by the Patriotic Union (UP) on 20 February]

[Text] The Patriotic Union yesterday reacted openly against the agreement to postpone the referendum to 9 October.

A communique issued yesterday by the UP National Coordination Board states:

Consistent with its democratic ideology and with its basic belief that the nation is demanding that sovereignty be returned to the people—the source of power and the only legitimate constituent—the UP supported the proposal of holding a plebiscite on 13 March to open the road to democratic reforms in Colombia.

However, President Virgilio Barco's government has demonstrated that his commitment is with the liberal and conservative oligarchies and not with the people. The regime has once again made evident its profound fear of truly free and democratic participation by the citizens.

We reject the exclusion and the autocratic arrangement that has resulted in the suspension of the plebiscite, thus denying to Colombians the possibility of participating directly in decisionmaking processes of the country's political life. The arrangement was made behind the back of forces such as the UP, the labor unions, the church, important media, such as the newspaper EL ESPECTADOR, and other democratic sectors that had openly stated their support for the 13 March date.

This situation shows the government's intention to promote reforms not aimed at democratizing the country, but, on the contrary, at strengthening a two-party system. This situation makes evident one of the current administration's postulates and institutionalizes the recently promulgated terrorist statute, which violates the most elemental human rights.

The UP is hereby urging all democratic forces to coordinate their actions and their struggle for an authentic plebiscite and a constituent national assembly where the people must be broadly represented, and where there would be a multiparty and pluralist assembly that would include labor, civic, agrarian, communal, youth, women's, and social organizations.

The UP is also calling for a mobilization on 24 February in defense of democracy and life and against the terrorist statute.

Army Kills 30 EPL Guerrillas, Captures 27

PA260321 Bogota Emisoras Caracol Network in Spanish 1215 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Report by Ruben Dario Carrillo]

[Text] Bogota—Thirty guerrillas have been killed and 27 others captured during counterinsurgency operations by the Army during the past 8 days in the (Alto Sinu) mountains, Cordoba Department.

According to military sources, 11th Brigade troops supported by helicopter gunships have engaged in bloody clashes for the past 8 days with members of the outlawed EPL, Popular Liberation Army, in the Ayapel mountain range and the Valencia, San Pedro, and Tierralta rural areas, where an Army patrol was ambushed a few days ago. Lieutenant Colonel Jaime Gerardo Diaz Lopez, Junin Battalion commander, was killed in that ambush.

Paraguay

Defense Minister Praises Electoral Results

PY260230 Asuncion ULTIMA HORA in Spanish 25 Feb 88 p 9

[Text] "Last Thursday in the office of the commander in chief of the Armed Forces, I conveyed to the president and commander in chief, on behalf of all generals and unit commanders, our satisfaction and our congratulations for the resounding 14 February electoral victory. I want to take advantage of this first session of the honorable Governing Board meeting after the elections to convey our pleasure to the board, and to the presidents of Colorado Party precincts present, for the victory in the recent elections."

This was stated by General German Gaspar Martinez, defense minister and ex-officio member of the Colorado Party Governing Board, during the session.

"This election was so calm and normal that there was not even reason to take anyone into custody. Only security measures were necessary. Happily, everything was totally normal," the general said.

"If we make a serene and responsible analysis, we will find that our triumph has three important aspects: First, it was demonstrated that we constitute the majority; second, we have to stress the outstanding work of the board's delegates throughout the country, the good organization, and the very efficient work of the Executive Board; and third, and most important, our candidate is invincible. That is all, Mr President," the Armed Forces spokesman said.

Comment on U.S. Envoy's, Church Remarks

Colorado Party President

PY251327 Asuncion EL DIARIO in Spanish 25 Feb 88 p 8

[Text] Referring to the latest comments by U.S.Ambassador Clyde Taylor, Colorado Party President Dr Sabino A. Montanaro yesterday said that, as usual, we know Ambassador Taylor's thinking very well. Thus, we maintain our usual views.

"In Paraguay, we stand for democracy, a democracy without communism; and if he interprets things in a different way, then his beliefs are his own concern," Montanaro said.

Referrring to the contentions voiced by the church concerning his comments that the Colorado Party is not worried by the opinion of the church, Dr Montanaro said: "That is the rash opinion of a Christian Democrat—Andrada Nogues. We do not know who he represents or on whose behalf he speaks. He claims to be a member of a Christian Democratic Party, which has not yet been recognized or established. Thus, there is no such problem with the church or with him."

When he was again reminded of the fact that the Paraguayan Episcopal Conference [CEP] itself released a public communique on this issue, the Colorado Party president replied: "I have seen it. However, the CEP is not saying that. The CEP is misinterpreting what I have said concerning the opinion of some priests, who speak on behalf of the church, and not of the church itself. Thus, there is no conflict with the government or with the church."

Asked about a petition filed to reopen the PRF [Febrerista Revolutionary Party] weekly EL PUEBLO, Dr Montanaro replied: "There is nothing to report yet."

Colorado Party Leaders

PY251640 Asuncion EL DIARIO in Spanish 25 Feb 88 p 8

[Text] In a 2-hour meeting, several members of the Colorado Party leadership emphasized the Colorado Party's victory in the recent elections, repudiated the comments made by U.S. Ambassador Clyde Taylor to foreign journalists, and raised contentions about church groups for their spirit of "confrontation."

Roberto Velazquez Escobar, a member of the Colorado Party leadership and the chairman of the Chamber of Deputies Foreign Relations Committee, said that since his arrival in our country, Ambassador Taylor "has virtually joined the opposition by giving it the required encouragement to seek to achieve the destabilization of the government of General Stroessner and of the Colorado Party. This is an objective he has not yet achieved and will never achieve."

Velazquez Escobar expressed his "repudiation of this bad representative who may be the secret leader of all the activities of the irregular groups. These groups seek to overthrow—and this must be stated clearly—the government of President Stroessner. They do not understand that President Stroessner and the Colorado Party are governing because they enjoy the support of the majority of the Paraguayan people."

Velazquez Escobar then expressed his "joy" for the "brilliant elections." "An effort has been made to tarnish these elections through through the comments made by this full-fledged opponent [contrera autentico] of the Colorado Party and Gen Stroessner," he said.

Among other speakers at the meeting, Dr Carlos Ortiz Ramirez, the Colorado Party political secretary, addressed the participants. Ramirez supported the denunciation made by Velazquez Escobar and expressed his contentions about the activities of some church representative who "have joined the destabilization campaign by distorting the true situation."

Ortiz Ramirez added that several priests are foresaking "the true practice that must be observed by the clergymen—both bishops and priests—to directly meddle in worldly matters that are not of their concern."

Ortiz Ramirez said one priest said the Paraguayan people must pass from words to actions and that these actions involve using weapons. "In our country, we do not want and we do not need people like Camilo Torres," he said.

Earlier, on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Committee, Manuel M. Esquivel gave an account of the organization and the final success achieved by the party in the recent national elections, an account that was approved by all the government junta members.

PLR Leader: U.S. 'Responsible' for System

PY251323 Asuncion HOY in Spanish 25 Feb 88 p 9

[Text] Emilio Forestieri, president of the Radical Liberal Party [PLR], has said the harsh criticism made by U.S. Ambassador Clyde Taylor to the international press about the political, human rights, and drug trafficking situation in Paraguay should not be interpreted as the ambassador's personal opinion, but as the position of the U.S. Government.

Forestieri said: "Ambassador Taylor's comments are the opinion of the U.S. Government, the Reagan administration, about the Paraguayan Government." He added that they are not the ambassador's personal opinion. Forestieri added: "Taylor is only a representative of the U.S. State Department in Paraguay."

Forestieri said that it is important "to explain that the Paraguayan regime is, without a doubt, the direct consequence of the U.S. presence here."

He then added that he is certain the current Stroessner regime no longer fully satisfies U.S. interests in the southern cone and that is why the ambassador made the criticism.

Forestieri said that "without a doubt the United States was the sponsor and defender" of the Stroessner regime and "that government is responsible for the growth of this authoritarian system prevailing in our country."

Venezuela

Minister on Exchange Rate, Gold Exports

PA251230 Caracas Venezolana de Television Canal 8 in Spanish 0000 GMT 25 Feb 88

[Text] Finance Minister Hector Hurtado has announced that in the last 2 months Venezuela has exported $226 million in gold, which has strengthened the country's foreign currency abroad.

According to Hurtado, the negotiation corresponds to the methods used to stimulate and strengthen the export policy and, consequently, the maintenance our international reserves. [sentence as heard] In this respect, Venezuela has begun to sell nontraditional products abroad, in which the gold produced in Guayana stands out as a priority item.

[Begin Hurtado recording] All the gold we are producing in Guayana is turned over to the Central Bank, which sends it to Switzerland to be refined and sold. [end recording]

The finance minister made these remarks during a luncheon hosted by the Venezuelan-American Chamber, where guest Hector Hurtado spoke on the prospects for foreign investment and the volume of exports as a way to compensate for the drop in oil prices. Among other things, he spoke about the study now under way to determine the exchange rate of the free dollar for exporters [words indistinct].

[Begin recording] [Hurtado] The formula has its problems.

[Reporter] What are the problems?

[Hurtado] The problem is the difference between the exchange rate of 14.50 and the free dollar. Who is going to pay for this? [end recording]

Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers approved the modification of Decree No 1521, which provides for cases of capitalization of foreign credits in private companies made on the basis of this decree. This means that in the future, creditors of nonrecognized debts can declare capital deductions and have the right to withdraw bolivars to buy dollars to reexport only once after 3 years have passed.

An important meeting will be held this Friday in the finance minister's office between the development minister and the presidents of the Venezuelan Investment Fund and the Central Bank of Venezuela to discuss the crisis on the capitalization of debts, which amounts to $300 million in the areas of pharmaceuticals, automobile spare parts, and aluminum.

Briefs

New Transportation Minister

Venezuelan President Jaime Lusinchi has sworn in Vicente Perez Cayena as new minister of transportation and communications. [Excerpt] *[Caracas Venezolana de Television Canal 8 in Spanish 0000 GMT 19 Feb 88 PA]*